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## *The Negro's Morale*





# *The Negro's Morale*

## **GROUP IDENTIFICATION AND PROTEST**

BY

Arnold M. Rose

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, Minneapolis  
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## FOREWORD

IN this book Professor Rose has organized many well-known and some not so well-known facts about the American Negro from a new point of view—their meaning for a sense of group membership. His point of reference is the subjective significance of being Negro rather than the objective status of Negro life. He examines both the history of the American Negro and contemporary Negro life in terms of the individual's sense of belonging, both to the subgroup of American Negroes and to the total American community.

The result is a notable contribution to a much-needed comparative literature on the psychology and sociology of subgroups. In the context of a growing concern with the problems of a pluralistic or multi-cultural society we have become increasingly interested in questions of identification with such subgroups, their cohesion, their survival and assimilation, the conditions under which loyalties to subgroups and to more inclusive groups may be successfully integrated, and so on. While Professor Rose treats these questions from the point of view of a single racial subgroup in our national community, much of what he says will illuminate the general problem of subgroup and wider group loyalties, a problem with which we are contending from the level of the local community to that of the community of nations.

Many readers will find Professor Rose's book of interest from a somewhat different point of view, that of intergroup relations. The significance of a knowledge of subgroups for an understanding of relationships among them is not always appreciated. Dr. Isidor Chein has made this point clear in a statement, *Group Membership and Group Belonging*, pre-

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pared for the International Congress on Mental Health (London, 1948):

"In any comprehensive social-psychological dynamic portrait of the problems of intergroup relations the major details that must be worked out concern reciprocal attitude and behavior patterns and their conditions. The propositions which have been much emphasized of late that the 'Negro problem' is really a white problem, that anti-Semitism is really a Christian problem, and so on, highlight the issues of moral responsibility and point a finger at the agents who are in the best position to do something about these problems. Yet, there are certain dangers in such a reorientation. From the point of view of the objects of discrimination and group hatred, for example, it encourages attitudes of fatalism, resignation, and passivity. Specifically from the viewpoint of social-psychological analysis, this reorientation (desirable as it may otherwise be) obscures rather than clarifies the problem. Anti-Semitism is not a Jewish problem, nor is it a Christian problem; it is a Jewish-Christian problem. Intergroup hostility and discrimination cannot be assessed in a vacuum. One must consider the consequences as well as the sources; the objects as well as the agents; the instances, forms, and occasions of reversals or abatements of agent-object relationships as well as their major directions and intensifications. Since, therefore, each of the interacting groups is after all a participant in the intergroup relations, some portion of the canvass must be reserved for the elaboration of the particular internal group structures and especially for such matters as potencies of membership character and the reactions of individuals to their group membership. Thus, in considering the problems of minority groups, these factors vitally influence the welfare of the group as a whole and its ability to combat and survive prejudice and discrimination directed against its members. They also have numerous and more direct psychological effects. They help to shape the self-atti-

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tudes and other reactive patterns with which the individual group members meet expressions of condescension, contempt, discrimination, hostility, and/or social ostracism. These reactive patterns may, in turn, contribute to the 'eligibility' or 'ineligibility' of the group members as the further butts of such expressions of intergroup prejudice."

When the Commission on Community Interrelations of the American Jewish Congress, as a result of its own research on these topics in relation to the Jewish group, came to appreciate the need for a systematic treatment of the question of group membership among other minority groups, it was natural to urge Professor Rose to undertake the task with regard to the American Negro. His important role in the work which led to *An American Dilemma*, as well as his numerous other publications on the Negro and Negro-white relations, equip him to an unusual degree for such a task.

To Professor Rose is due a considerable debt for the provision of a pioneering field-structuring statement in an area where more and more research effort is being concentrated.

STUART W. COOK

*Director of Research, Commission on Community  
Interrelations of the American Jewish Congress*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE author's first debt of gratitude in the preparation of this small book is to Stuart Cook, director of research of Commission on Community Interrelations of the American Jewish Congress. It was Dr. Cook's idea that these facts and interpretations be brought together so that there might be available to the general reader some source of understanding of this very important and little known aspect of intergroup relations. Studies in the armed forces and in industry in recent years have made clear the central importance of morale, but there has been little understanding thus far that so amorphous a group as a racial, nationality, or religious group in the United States could have a changing morale that helps to determine how its members will behave. The Commission on Community Interrelations also bore some of the financial burdens which the study entailed.

The author gratefully acknowledges the encouragement and helpful criticism that came from Isidor Chein, Kenneth B. Clark, John Harding, and Ulysses Lee. These friends, who are also scientists of reputation in the field of intergroup relations, stimulated the author in his efforts to organize facts and ideas on this difficult subject.

It would be a serious oversight not to acknowledge the author's debt to all the other persons who have contributed to the author's experiences in the field of intergroup relations. While they are too numerous to list by name, they are the ones who, fundamentally, made this monograph possible.

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*University of Minnesota*  
*August 1949*

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## *The Negro's Morale*



## I. THE MORALE of a Group with Minority Status

**M**EMBERS of a minority group — a racial, nationality, or religious group that the other members of a society define as having subordinate status — are likely to feel a sense of kinship with each other. This feeling of belonging to the minority group we call “group identification,” and it is this phenomenon that we shall study among Negroes. It manifests itself most frequently in one of two ways: *protest* when the group is injured in some way, or expressions of *pride* in the group.

Our subjects, then, will largely be protest and race pride, and their opposites. We use the term “group identification” in a positive sense. It involves not only a recognition that because of one’s ancestry one is a member of a racial or religious group, nor only a recognition that the majority group defines one as belonging to that racial or religious group. It also involves a positive desire to identify oneself as a member of the group and a feeling of pleasure when one does so identify oneself. Since group morale can be defined as the ability of members of a group to hold together in the face of adversity and to act together in a concerted way to achieve the group’s goals, group identification is closely related to group morale and we shall use the terms almost interchangeably.<sup>1</sup> Another term frequently used to describe this condition is “group solidarity.”

NOTE: Parts of the first two chapters have been adapted and expanded from *America Divided*, by Arnold and Caroline Rose, by special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1948 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

<sup>1</sup> The term “morale” has many diverse meanings, some of which are not at all equated with positive group identification. We use morale in the sense

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The feeling of kinship may stem originally from common culture traits and a common origin or from pressure from the majority group. The latter is the case among Negroes, at least. Locke and Stern make this same observation in a more generalized way:

Minority group consciousness, although it may have originated in cultural distinctiveness, becomes increasingly a product of enforced relations to a majority treatment and policy. A minority group, irrespective of size or constituency, is thus best characterized as a social group whose solidarity is primarily determined by external pressure, which forces it to live in terms of opposition and ostracism.<sup>2</sup>

The majority group considers the members of the minority group to be alike, even if they are not, and it is not uncommon for members of the minority group to express their feelings of kinship by emphasizing those common traits which the majority group holds to be characteristic of them. The members of the group have common experiences which are important to them, and therefore they have common understandings. When the minority group emphasizes its minority characteristics and gives great weight to its common understandings it may be said to have high morale or high group identification — it is proud of its minority status

of loyalty to or solidarity with the group, which gives the individual a sense of rightness and strength even though the group is weak and despised. Morale thus becomes synonymous with group identification. In another sense, morale might mean self-confidence, with which an individual could frankly criticize the group to outsiders. Such a definition would have little value for the study of minority groups, since the latter are in conflict with the larger society, and for one of the minority group members to criticize his group to outsiders would be akin to treason. Morale could also be defined as personal adjustment and happiness; this is incorporated in our use of the term only in so far as the adjustment has been made to the group. Studies of both soldiers and civilians during World War II revealed that some of the different types of morale had little or no relationship to each other. We feel justified, therefore, in using a limited definition of morale when we find that definition useful for the study of group relations.

<sup>2</sup> Alain Locke and Bernhard Stern, *When Peoples Meet* (New York: Progressive Education Association, 1942), p. 465.

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and is battling the majority group. But a minority group may also have low morale. It can be so downtrodden or so ashamed of its subordinate status that the only thing the members of the group think they have in common is the characteristic of being picked on by the majority group.

When a minority group is the object of strong prejudice from the majority group, and yet has low group identification, its members are likely to be unhappy people. They are so ashamed of their subordinate status that their chief concern is to escape being identified as members of the minority. They change their names, they disavow their ancestors, they avoid associating with other members of the group. They can develop no effective organization to protest the discrimination against them, nor to fight for an improvement of group status. When one of their number is made the object of violence or other unusual deprivation, they sympathize but do nothing to retaliate or to prevent a recurrence. We shall find both high and low morale traits in this survey of group identification of Negroes. One of our central themes will be that the trend over the last forty years has been from low morale to high morale.

Group identification grows up as a defensive device; after developing, however, it becomes one of the major offensive methods. When the majority group is engaged in a range of activities designed to harm members of a minority group and to make them feel inferior, the latter react in certain ways and seek various compensations. They tend to look back into their history for evidence against the majority group's charge that they are culturally inferior. Sometimes they go so far as to find that their group has produced the world's greatest statesmen and artists. Some of them examine the current unique features in their culture and label them outstanding manifestations of folk genius. Their apologists produce evidence that most cultures, especially the culture of the majority group, borrowed something from their culture, but

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little attention is given to their own borrowings. They organize to protest against manifestations of prejudice in strategic instances. They put pressure on those members of their own group who conform to the role demanded of them by the majority group.

All these things cement the group into a fighting force. They give the group self-confidence, pride, bonds of loyalty, and basic understandings that allow for extensive communication without many words. In other terms, they give it morale. The individual member of the minority group is not only able to withstand the majority's attacks on his body and mind, but is also transformed into a disciplined soldier ready to "fight the enemy." There are, of course, great differences of opinion, of personality, and of experience between members of a minority group, but when group identification is high, they act as if cast in the same mold when confronting the majority group. Du Bois describes this interplay of outer compulsion, separation, group identification, and morale for the Negro minority of the United States:

The so-called American Negro group . . . while it is in no sense absolutely set off physically from its fellow Americans, has nevertheless a strong, hereditary cultural unity, born of slavery, of common suffering, prolonged proscription and curtailment of political and civil rights; and especially because of economic and social disabilities. Largely from this fact, have arisen the Negroes' cultural gifts to America — their rhythm, music, and folk song; their religious faith and customs; their contribution to American art and literature; their defense of their country in every war, on land, sea, and in the air; and especially the hard, continuous toil upon which the prosperity and wealth of this continent has largely been built.

The group has long been internally divided by dilemma as to whether its striving upward should be aimed at strengthening its inner cultural and group bonds, both for intrinsic progress and for offensive power against caste; or whether it should seek escape wherever and however possible into the surrounding Amer-

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ican culture. Decision in this matter has been largely determined by outer compulsion rather than inner plan; for prolonged policies of segregation and discrimination have involuntarily welded the mass almost into a nation within a nation with its own schools, churches, hospitals, newspapers and many business enterprises.<sup>8</sup>

It is a basic sociological generalization — unfortunately too often not recognized by the prejudiced elements of the public — that the course of intergroup relations is determined mainly by the majority group. The so-called Negro problem is thus primarily the white man's problem, and the Jewish problem is perpetuated in the minds and hearts of Christians. Nevertheless, the minority group also has a certain influence on its relations with the majority group — not only because of obnoxious traits, which the majority group puts in the forefront of its attention, but also because the character of its group identification determines how it is going to react to the actions of the majority group. We shall analyze in Chapter VI the relationship between the current character of Negro group identification and the status of race relations in the United States.

Since the Negro problem is so largely a white man's problem, it may be that most aspects of Negro-white relations can best be analyzed by a discerning white man. He can more easily get into places where no Negro is allowed, and he can better see into the typical white man's mind — if he is willing to see its reflection in his own mind. But Negro group identification is not one of these aspects of the race problem; it is rather a subject that a Negro can analyze much better than can a white man. A white man can never feel quite as a Negro does when he is experiencing group identification or the subordinating influences from whites that lead to group identification. There are places that a white man can seldom

<sup>8</sup> W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "Three Centuries of Discrimination," *Crisis*, 54 (December 1947), 362-63.



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get into, nor is he allowed to understand certain things that Negroes keep for themselves.

For these reasons the author is being somewhat presumptuous in writing about a matter which so many other persons could handle much better. Yet Negro writers have not tackled the job. The nearest approaches — far from being the systematic sociological analyses that are called for — occur in some of the autobiographies and in Roi Ottley's '*New World A-Coming*,' which is primarily a description of the Harlem community.<sup>4</sup> In scientific writing by Negroes the nearest approach to a study of group identification is in some parts of Drake and Cayton's *Black Metropolis*, but this is primarily a study of the Negro "problem" in Chicago. Negroes tend not to write about their group identification because, when they have a chance to write in a medium that will get wide circulation, they seem to feel their effort should be directed toward whatever will most further the race's cause — another example of high morale and group identification — instead of revealing what goes on in the inner circle. Drake and Cayton observe, for example: "Works like *Black Metropolis* [their own excellent study] are likely to draw the fire of very race-conscious Negroes who feel that the authors are betraying secrets that should stay within The Race."<sup>5</sup> Negro writing is largely protest writing, even when it is thoroughly scientific and objective. Also it is easier for Negroes to analyze or describe the race problem in general than it is for them to analyze developments in their own or their parents' thinking about how Negroes should behave.

A public description of Negro group identification may help to bring Negro-white relations to a higher plane.

<sup>4</sup> Predecessors of Ottley in describing the Harlem community also gave some picture of Negro group identification: (1) James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: Knopf, 1930); (2) Claude McKay, *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* (New York: Dutton, 1940).

<sup>5</sup> St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis* (New York: Harcourt, 1945), p. 728.

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Most whites are still acting toward Negroes on the basis of old stereotypes, even when they have no deliberate or strong prejudice. They are surprised and shocked when they first see a Negro newspaper, and consider it to be a fomentor of violence. They regard courageous and intelligent Negro leaders solely as agitators. Many Northern whites see the Negro as a troublemaker, without understanding the cause of the Negro's being a trouble or what kind of trouble it is. For many Southern whites, the average Negro is still a stupid and easygoing fool who desires little more than to satisfy his animal appetites. Dissemination of knowledge about the characteristics of Negro group identification can help to dispel these false pictures. In their relations and negotiations with whites, Negroes need to be taken for what they are and not for some kind of caricature. The description of Negro group identification is a description of what Negroes are as a consequence of their minority status and of their reacting against that minority status.

Our description should have practical value not only for Negroes but also for other minority groups. As America's largest and most conspicuous minority, and because a background in slavery gave them so few strengths to start with, Negroes have been subjected to more deprivations than have other minority groups. As a consequence, they have reacted more — their group identification is more highly developed. Jews, Catholics, Orientals, and even the dominant white Protestants have much to learn from the Negroes. Members of other minority groups are fond of saying that their problem has nothing in common with that of the Negroes. Such a remark is open to the suspicion that the people expressing it are simply indicating their disdain of Negroes, their refusal to be identified with America's "lowest" minority group. However, there may be some truth in it in so far as the historical background and psychological causes of prejudice toward different minority groups is different. But in so far as

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they are *reacting* to their subordination by the majority group, they have much in common. They all have to meet segregation, discrimination, violence, and the subtler forms of prejudice. The ways in which they meet these things are simply variations on the same theme. The common problem is to keep up morale, effectively oppose discrimination, and reduce the effects of prejudice. One group can learn much from another in these matters.

## II. HISTORY *of the Growth of* *Group Identification among Negroes*

### IN SLAVERY

IT is difficult to tell how Negroes reacted under slavery. Few Negroes were allowed to learn to read and write, and any communication of theirs apprehended in the South was destroyed. Thus few written descriptions of what was going on among them have survived. Further, it became one of the Southern white man's myths that the Negro was well off and satisfied under slavery. He had to justify the system to his own conscience and "prove" that the North, with its Emancipation Proclamation, was wrong. Any tale of rebellion or other group reaction by Negroes was suppressed.

There was not much opportunity for group identification among Negroes under slavery. At first they were divided by language differences—Africa had not one language but many. Masters did not let their slaves congregate, and there was thus no way for them to communicate with each other. Without communication they were a group only in the sense that they were in a common condition and had some common physical characteristics. Another reason for the lack of group identification was the existence of sharp divisions between the various classes of Negroes—some of which were fostered by the whites on the well-known principle of "divide and conquer." On many a plantation there were at least one or two slaves who spied on their fellows and reported to their masters what went on.<sup>1</sup> They would be given little

<sup>1</sup> Social Science Institute, Fisk University, "Unwritten History of Slavery: Autobiographical Account of Negro Ex-Slaves." Mimeographed. Nashville, Tenn.: 1945. Pp. 9-10, 35.

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rewards to make it worth their while, but the important fact is that there was not enough pressure from the other Negroes to prevent this sort of thing.

Among the slaves there was a sharp division between house slaves and field slaves. The former had better health, better clothing, better manners, and usually lighter color, and they frequently lorded it over the field slaves, who lived little better than animals. This difference was carried forward by the freedmen, who were often illegitimate children of white masters or their favorite house slaves. Although completely without civil rights themselves in the South, the freedmen developed the myth that the division in America was not between Negro and white man but between free-man and slave. Thus many of them developed almost the same attitude toward slaves that the white man had, and a few of them owned slaves themselves. This class of pre-Civil War freedmen also tried to maintain a caste distinction between themselves and the slaves, even after the latter were freed by the Civil War. "Mulatto societies" were formed in Charleston, Savannah, Atlanta, Washington, and even in many of the Northern cities, which avoided "intermarriage" with dark Negroes and set "high" standards for themselves in order to avoid being associated with the "common" Negroes. Remnants of these groups remain to this very day, but most of them have changed drastically to conform to the needs of the larger Negro group.

Despite the lack of opportunities, there are evidences that some group identification of Negroes under slavery did exist, and that it had its effect on white people. There were at least fifty-five recorded mutinies on the boats bringing slaves to America.<sup>2</sup> Kept in the holds and often shackled, Negroes could seldom get in a position to attack the white crew, much less get weapons to give their mutiny a chance of suc-

<sup>2</sup> Harvey Wish, "American Slave Insurrections Before 1861," *Journal of Negro History*, 22 (July 1937), 303-6.

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cess. Nevertheless there are reports of unsuccessful mutinies, which usually ended in most or all of the slaves being thrown or jumping voluntarily into the sea, and there are many other accounts of suicide.<sup>3</sup> There is at least one report of a successful mutiny, in which the whites were killed and the sea-ignorant Negroes were able to make their way into a Massachusetts port.<sup>4</sup>

On land there were far larger and more significant slave revolts. No one knows exactly how many there were. Aptheker lists approximately 250 revolts and uprisings in the continental United States during the period of slavery.<sup>5</sup> While there is some question as to the accuracy of available historical information, Aptheker provides enough evidence to indicate that the slave revolts were not rare. Three of these revolts have become somewhat known because of the strong character of their leaders, and because they were organized over counties and across state lines. These were the revolts led by Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner. Thousands of Negroes were at least partial conspirators in each of these uprisings, and hundreds were caught and executed after each revolt was betrayed or successfully put down. Even in failure, the slave revolts had the effect of stimulating group identification, since there was pride in the revolters and a bitter joy at the constant anxiety of the whites.

Another manifestation of group identification was in religion. After the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831, slaves in many states were not allowed to congregate, even for religious meetings, without a white man being present. Moreover, slaves could not leave their quarters without a written pass

<sup>3</sup> Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941), pp. 87-88.

<sup>4</sup> John Barber, *A History of the Amistad Captives* (New Haven: 1840), unbound. This story is retold in Muriel Rukeyser, *Willard Gibbs* (New York: Doubleday, 1942).

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 162.

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from their masters. White patrollers rode up and down the roads and scanned the fields for any sign of a Negro. Nevertheless it was apparently common for the Negroes of an area to elude the "paderollers," as they were called, and meet together for religious services. A tradition has come down that the noise of the meeting was prevented from attracting the whites' attention by means of large overturned buckets placed near doors and windows. They were supposed to "trap the sound." Whether effective or not, whether legend or not, the overturned buckets were mentioned in nearly every interview with an ex-slave in a study conducted by Fisk University in 1929-30.<sup>6</sup>

The Negro slaves were pleased when they could outwit the whites either by having church services or in other ways. The church services thus had an element of conspiracy about them; they brought Negroes together in a physical group, provided centers of communication, and allowed for an exchange of views. The content of religion also promoted group feeling. The sermons have not been preserved, of course, but the songs — spirituals — frequently have a strong, if camouflaged, protest motive and a unifying effect: "Let My People Go," "Steal Away to Jesus," "This World Is Not My Home." (The secular songs had the same effect — for example, "Walk Jawbone, Come Jine the Re [railroad].") In slavery days, the church services were undoubtedly the most important institution promoting Negro group identification.

The Underground Railroad was an informal organization composed largely of abolitionist whites.<sup>7</sup> Negroes were too few in the North, too widely dispersed, and too poor to aid a great deal in the Railroad. But there were some Negroes in leading positions in it. More than a "conductor" was "General" Harriet Tubman, who took great personal risks to get

<sup>6</sup> Social Science Institute, Fisk University, "Unwritten History of Slavery."

<sup>7</sup> A good account of the Underground Railroad is: Henrietta Buckmaster, *Let My People Go* (New York: Harper, 1941).

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Negroes out of the South. The runaway slaves themselves were making a courageous protest against slavery, as well as gaining their personal freedom.<sup>8</sup> But the main way in which it was a source of group identification was as a means of outwitting the whites. Many Southern Negroes helped the escapees and would usually rather be beaten than betray the hiding place of one of them. There was an air of conspiracy among even distant Negroes when they heard the news that another nameless slave had "flown the coop."

To thwart the white masters, even in the most petty ways, was a main channel of group identification. Getting a little extra food, stealing a bit of finery, evading an hour's work, slowing down in the job — these were everyday expressions of the Negro's protest. The lore describing these subterfuges and how they were accomplished was cement for an otherwise traditionless Negro population. Folklore itself was a form of protest and helped keep up the slaves' group morale.

But bright sayings and funny stories were part of a cultural pattern as well as of mother wit. In slavery's "state of perpetual war" (in Redpath's phrase), folklore was a weapon of both master and slave. Through the whole code of luck signs, of charms,

<sup>8</sup> The director of the Vigilante Committee in Philadelphia, Robert Purvis, estimated that his group aided 9,000 slaves to escape in the twenty years he was its head. Governor Quitman of Massachusetts declared that between 1810 and 1850 the South lost 100,000 slaves, with or without the aid of the Underground Railroad. Canada had a Negro population of 50,000 by 1860, the great bulk of which consisted of escaped slaves from the United States.

But escaping from slavery could be a sign of despair as well as of morale. A document quoted by Ottley reveals indirectly some of the psychological weakness involved in escape. This was a public letter to Negroes still in slavery prepared by a convention of fifty fugitive slaves at Cazenovia, New York. It reveals that some Negroes believed that their ownership by whites was justified: ". . . Numerous as are the escapes from slavery, they would be far more so, were you not embarrassed by your misinterpretation of the rights of property. You hesitate to take even the dullest of your master's horses — whereas it is your duty to take the fleetest. . . . You are taught to respect the rights of property. But no such rights belong to the slaveholder. His right of property is but the robber-right." (Roi Ottley, *Black Odyssey: The Story of the Negro in America* [New York: Scribner, 1948], pp. 154-55.)



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and taboos, as well as through "fireside training" in "mannerableness" and the good-timing of folk gatherings, the master kept a fearful and restless people in hand. "Old training is best, and I cannot forget my manners." "Old Master was good to us. He said he wanted us singing and shouting and working in the field from morning to night." At the same time, the slave used the power of luck for his own protection, as in conjuring the hounds or carrying a rabbit's foot in his pocket to keep from getting whipped. And in his folk stories and anecdotes he took a subtle revenge on his master by turning the tables on him. Just as Br'er Rabbit, in a politer form, for the entertainment of the whites, symbolizes the triumph of cunning over superior force, so among themselves the Negroes told more realistic and more caustic tales of Old John, the slave who outwits his master, even though he sometimes gets caught. Take the sardonic jest, "Old Massa's Gone to Philameyork": While the slaves were feasting, the master returned from a pretended trip ("He just wanted to see what they would do if they thought he was away"), "disguised as a tramp — face smutty and clothes all dirty and raggedy. They couldn't tell who he was. He walked up just as though he wanted to eat and begged the boys for something to eat. The boys said to him: 'Stand back, you shabby rascal you. Iffen they's anything left, you get some; iffen they ain't none left, you get none. This is our time. Old Massa done gone to Philameyork, and we're having a big time.'"<sup>9</sup>

Often folklore took the form of humor: "The master says to a young slave, 'You scoundrel, you ate my turkey,' and the slave replies, 'Yes, Suh, Massa, you got less turkey but you sho' got more nigger.'"<sup>10</sup> The slave lives to eat another turkey and the master has another entertaining story, as Weatherford and Johnson point out in recounting this anecdote. But for the Negro group at large it was also a tale retold to show how clever the Negro was, and had to be, and to identify each hearer with his Negro prototype in the story. An-

<sup>9</sup> B. A. Botkin (ed.), *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> W. D. Weatherford and C. S. Johnson, *Race Relations* (Boston: Heath, 1934), p. 284.

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other tragicomic story comes out of an interview with an ex-slave:

I remember Mammy told me about one master who almost starved his slaves. Mighty stingy, I reckon he was.

Some of them slaves was so poorly thin they ribs would kinda rustle against each other like corn stalks a-drying in the hot winds. But they gets even one hog-killing time, and it was funny, too, Mammy said.

They was seven hogs, fat and ready for all hog-killing time. Just the day before Old Master told off they was to be killed, something happened to all them porkers. One of the field boys found them and come a-telling the master: "The hogs is all died, now they won't be any meats for the winter."

When the master gets to where at the hogs is laying, they's a lot of Negroes standing around looking sorrow-eyed at the wasted meat. The master asks: "What's the illness with 'em?"

"Malitis," they tells him, and they acts like they don't want to touch the hogs. Master says to dress them anyway for they ain't no more meat on the place.

He says to keep all the meat for the slave families, but that's because he's afraid to eat it hisself account of the hogs' got malitis.

"Don't you all know what is malitis?" Mammy would ask the children when she was telling of the seven fat hogs and seventy lean slaves. And she would laugh, remembering how they fooled Old Master so's to get all them good meats.

"One of the strongest Negroes got up early in the morning," Mammy would explain, "long 'fore the rising horn called the slaves from their cabins. He skitted to the hog pens with a heavy mallet in his hand. When he tapped Mister Hog 'tween the eyes with that mallet, 'malitis' set in mighty quick, but it was a uncommon 'disease,' even with hungry Negroes around all the time."<sup>11</sup>

Not all the cleverness was humorous. Ottley quotes an interview with an ex-slave to illustrate how Negroes had to be clever to aid each other:

Was servin' gal fo' Missus. Used to have to stand behind her at

<sup>11</sup> Botkin (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

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de table an' reach her de salt an' syrup an' anything else she called fo'. Ole Marsa would spell out real fas' anything he don't want me to know 'bout. One day Marsa was fit to be tied, he was in sech a bad mood. Was ravin' 'bout de crops, an' taxes, an' de triflin' niggers he got to feed. "Gonna sell 'em, I swear fo' Christ. I gonna sell 'em," he says. Den old Missus ask which ones he gonna sell an' tell him quick to spell it. Den he spell out "G-A-B-E and R-U-F-U-S." Course I stood dere without battin' an eye, an' makin' believe I didn't hear him, but I was packin' dem letters up in my head all de time. An' soon's I finished dishes I rushed down to my father an' say 'em to him jus' like Marsa say 'em. Father say quiet-like: "Gabe and Rufus," an' tol' me to go on back to de house an' say I ain't been out. De next day Gabe and Rufus was gone — dey had run away.<sup>12</sup>

However, these petty ways of outwitting whites, and the lore about them, were also ways of weakening group morale in so far as they were recognized to be petty and channeled effective group opposition into harmless glorifications of the individual. Some of the "funny" stories told by ex-slaves reveal acceptance of the masters' standards, and the ineffectiveness of stealing and humor in keeping up group morale:

Master didn't whip, only once. That 'cause a nigger steal he favorite pumpkin. He am saving that for to get the seed, and it am big as the ten-gallon jug. The corn field am full of pumpkins, but that nigger done took Master's choice one. That pumpkin am so big he have to tussle with it 'fore he get it to he cabin. It like stealing a elephant, you can't hide it in the watch pocket. Course, lots of niggers seed that colored gentleman with that pumpkin, and 'fore long Master know it.

Well, sir, it am the funny sight to see him punish that nigger. First, Master sot him down on the ground front the quarters, where us all see him. Then he make that nigger set down and give him the big bowl pumpkin sauce and make him eat it. Him eat and eat and get so full him can't hardly swallow, and Master say, "Eat some more, it am awful good." That nigger try, but

<sup>12</sup> Ottley, *Black Odyssey*, p. 125.

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him can't eat no more. Master give him the light brushing, and it am funny to see that colored gentleman with pumpkin smear on he face and tears running down he face. After that, us children call him Master Pumpkin, and Master never have no more trouble with stealing he seed pumpkin.<sup>13</sup>

Folk-tales proper were projective means of expressing protest. Probably many folk stories have been lost, but there are several collections available now in published form. One series — the Brer Rabbit and Uncle Remus group — has not only been preserved by the Southern white journalist, Joel Chandler Harris, but also has been thoroughly analyzed by folklorists. Bernard Wolfe has published one of the more enlightening interpretations of these very popular tales.<sup>14</sup> Although his analysis cannot be completely validated according to strict scientific criteria, there is strong historical and ethnographic evidence behind it.

Harris got his stories about Brer Rabbit from Negroes in various parts of the South, but he dressed them up for white consumption by putting them into the mouth of a kindly old Negro, Uncle Remus, who fitted the Southern stereotype of the contented slave. The Brer Rabbit stories did not come out of Africa, but grew up under slavery. The theme of most of the stories is the same: The weak Rabbit outwits the strong Fox. Slaves identified themselves with the Rabbit, and identified the white man with the Fox. The Rabbit not only saves himself from the Fox by his cleverness on innumerable occasions, but he strikes back at the Fox and eventually leads him to his death. Harris records how Negroes of the 1880's told him these stories gleefully and almost obsessively — once they came to trust him. According to Wolfe, these Negroes expressed their hatred of the white man through these stories. Wolfe shows that Harris was aware of this but camouflaged the hatred with the stereotyped Uncle

<sup>13</sup> Botkin (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Bernard Wolfe, "Uncle Remus and the Malevolent Rabbit," *Commentary*, 8 (July 1949), 31-41.

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Remus and with the statement that the stories originated in Africa.

While Brer Rabbit's aggressions expressed the hatred of Negroes toward whites and thereby built Negro group identification, like all symbolic expressions they necessarily deflected the more direct manifestations. As Wolfe says:

Of course, the original oral stories would not express the slave's aggressions straightforwardly either. A Negro slave who yielded his mind fully to his race hatreds in an absolutely white-dominated situation must go mad; and the function of such folk symbols as Brer Rabbit is precisely to prevent inner explosions by siphoning off these hatreds before they can completely possess consciousness.<sup>15</sup>

Thus again we see the psychological limits of group identification, as well as of self-expression, under slavery.

More effective, both as a way of encouraging Negro group identification and as a way of providing effective opposition to whites, was the organized protest against slavery as an institution. The Negroes in the abolitionist movement in the North — William G. Allen, Dr. James McCune Smith, Martin Delany, William Wells Brown, Sojourner Truth, Robert Purvis, Samuel Cornish, Charles L. Remond, Henry H. Garnet, David Ruggles, William Still, Harriet Tubman, Charles B. Ray, John M. Langston, Frederick Douglass, and many others — set the pattern on which Negroes based their future protest. Except for assisting in the Underground Railroad, the new pattern consisted of nonviolent legal activities in accord with the democratic principles of the American Creed and the Christian religion. The protest to the whites was also a way of unifying the Negroes. Frederick Douglass became the outstanding Negro leader from 1845 to 1875 through his speeches, his editorials, and his activities on behalf of the Republican party and the woman's suffrage move-

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

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ment. His Fourth of July oration at Rochester in 1852 reveals the new pattern of Negro protest and the new basis of Negro group identification that has predominated, except for one long period of decline from 1880 to 1910, to this day.

What to the American slave is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, and solemnity, are, to him, more bombast, fraud, deception, impiety and hypocrisy — a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. . . .

You boast of your love of liberty, your superior civilization, and your pure Christianity, while the whole political power of the nation (as embodied in the two great political parties) is solemnly pledged to support and perpetuate the enslavement of three millions of your countrymen. You hurl your anathemas at the crown-headed tyrants of Russia and Austria and pride yourselves on your democratic institutions, while you yourselves consent to be the mere *tools* and *bodyguards* of the tyrants of Virginia and Carolina. You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad, honor them with banquets, greet them with ovations, cheer them, toast them, salute them, protect them, and pour out your money to them like water; but the fugitives from your own land you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot, and kill. You glory in your refinement and your universal education; yet you maintain a system as barbarous and dreadful as ever stained the character of a nation — a system begun in avarice, supported in pride, and perpetuated in cruelty. You shed tears over fallen Hungary, and make the sad story of her wrongs the theme of your poets, statesmen and orators, till your gallant sons are ready to fly to arms to vindicate her cause against the oppressor; but, in regard to the ten thousand wrongs of the American slave, you would enforce the strictest silence, and would hail him as an enemy of the na-

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tion who dares to make those wrongs the subject of public discourse! <sup>18</sup>

Precursors of a major twentieth-century way of promoting Negro group identification, Negro newspapers were started in the North to express the protest and to promote the abolitionist movement. The first Negro newspaper in the United States, *Freedom's Journal*, was started in New York City in 1827 by Rev. Samuel E. Cornish, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, and John B. Russworm, the first Negro to graduate from an American college. The purpose of this and later Negro newspapers was frankly propagandistic. They also tried to unite Negroes and raise their spirits as a group.

Although all these influences helped to promote Negro group identification, it should not be thought that the group feeling was strong. The slaves' life was too animal-like for group pride to develop; it was too repressed for effective protest. Few slaves were proud to be Negroes, and many mulatto freedmen tried to dissociate themselves from the "blacks." Probably only a small proportion of the free Negroes were active in the only really effective protest movement—abolitionism. Certainly few freedmen living in the South were in a position to participate in the abolitionist movement. Negroes as individuals were disorganized, and it would be questionable to say that a Negro group existed even in a biological sense. For the slaves, even such manifestations of morale as stealing and loafing were frustrating because they were so petty. When the extreme ignorance of the Negro population under slavery is added to all these influences, it may be concluded that Negro slaves had a very small amount of group identification.

### RECONSTRUCTION AND RESTORATION

With the support of the pro-Southern president, Andrew Johnson, the defeated Southern states largely succeeded in

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* (New York: Harcourt, 1935), pp. 14-15.

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keeping the Negro in a condition of slavery for the first two years after the end of the Civil War. The "Black Codes" of 1865-67 prevented Negroes from moving, from congregating, from organizing, and even from communicating across plantation lines. Still, the Negroes knew that they were "freed," and, mostly under cover of the general disorganization that the war caused in the South, they began to move around and communicate with each other. Despite repressive measures, vagrancy was common during the first two years. There was elation in the air, even if suppressed in the presence of whites, and this was manifested even in the songs, which are among the few legacies handed down by these predominantly illiterate people.

Mammy don't you cook no mo',  
You's free! You's free!  
Rooster don't you crow no mo',  
You's free! You's free!  
Ol' hen, don't you lay no mo' eggs,  
You's free! You's free!  
Ol' pig, don't you grunt no mo',  
You's free! You's free!  
Ol' cow, don't you give no mo' milk,  
You's free! You's free!  
Ain't got to slave no mo',  
We's free! We's free! <sup>17</sup>

A few tales have also come down of how ex-slaves "told off" their former masters as they left them.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps much of this telling-off served more to relieve repressed hatred than to promote a spirited group morale, as this story related by an ex-slave suggests:

Well, all Master Ed Mobley's niggers like to stay with him after freedom. They just stay on without the whippings. Instead of

<sup>17</sup> United States Works Progress Administration, *The Negro in Virginia*, compiled by the Writers' Program of Work Projects Administration (New York: Hastings House, 1940), p. 210.

<sup>18</sup> Social Science Institute, Fisk University, "Unwritten History of Slavery."



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whippings they just got cussings, good one too. There was two old men, Joe Raines and Joe Murray, that he was particular fond of. Maybe he more love Joe Raines the bestest. One day Joe Murray let the cows get away in the corn field. At dinnertime Master Ed cuss him before the whole crowd of hands, laying around before dinner and he cuss him powerful. After dinner Joe Murray grieve and complain much about it to the crowd. Joe Raines up and allow: "Next time he cuss you, do like I do, just cuss him back. This is a free country, yes sir. Just give him as good a cussing as he gives you."

Not long after that, the boar hog get out the lot gate, when Joe Murray was leading his mule out. Master Ed lit out on Joe Murray a-cussing, and Joe Murray lit out on Master Ed a-cussing, and then Master Ed catch Joe and give him a slavery-time whipping and turn him loose. Joe Murray take his mule on to the field, where he glum with Joe Raines. Joe Murray tell about the boar hog getting out and the cussings and the whippings. Joe Raines allow: "You didn't cuss him right. You never cuss him like I cuss him, or you'd never got a whipping." Joe Murray allow: "How you cuss him then, Joe?" Say Joe Raines very slow: "Well, when I cuss Master Ed, I goes 'way down in the bottoms where the corn grow high and got a black color. I looks east and west and north and south. I see no Master Ed. Then I pitches into him and gives him the worst cussing a man ever give another man. Then when I goes back to the house, my feelings is satisfied from the cussing I give him, and he is sure to make up with me, for Master Ed don't bear anger in his bosom long. The next time cuss him, but be sure to go 'way off somewhere so he can't hear you, nigger."<sup>19</sup>

Some ex-slaves did not even get the emotional satisfaction of telling off their ex-masters, because peonage became established in some areas of the South as strongly as slavery had been. One ex-slave told an interviewer the following story during the 1930's:

After Sherman come through Atlanta, he let the slaves go, and when he did, me and some of the other slaves went back to our

<sup>19</sup> Botkin (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

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old master. Old Man Governor Brown was my boss man. After the war was over, Old Man Gordon took me and some of the others out to Mississippi. I stayed in peonage out there for 'bout forty years. I was located at just 'bout forty miles south of Greenwood, and I worked on the plantations of Old Man Sara Jones and Old Man Gordon.

I couldn't git away 'cause they watched us with guns all the time. When the levee busted, that freed me. Man, they was devils; they wouldn't 'low you to go nowhere — not even to church. You done good to git something to eat. They wouldn't give you no clothes, and if you got wet you just had to lay down in what you got wet in.

And, man, they would whup you in spite of the devil. You had to ask to git water — if you didn't they would stretch you 'cross a barrel and wear you out. If you didn't work in a hurry, they would whup you with a strap that had five-six holes in it. I ain't talking 'bout what I heard — I'm talking 'bout what I done seed.

One time they sent me on Old Man Mack Williams' farm in Jasper County, Georgia. That man would kill you sure. If that little branch on his plantation could talk it would tell many a tale 'bout folks being knocked in the head. I done seen Mack Williams kill folks, and I done seen him have folks killed. One day he told me that if my wife had been goodlooking, I never would sleep with her again 'cause he'd kill me and take her and raise childrens offen her. They used to take women away from their husbands, and put with some other man to breed just like they would do cattle. They always kept a man penned up, and they used him like a stud hoss.

When you didn't go right, Old Mack Williams would shoot you or tie a chain round your neck and throw you in the river. He'd git them other niggers to carry them to the river, and if they didn't he'd shoot 'em down. Any time they didn't do what he said, he would shoot 'em down. He'd tell 'em to "Catch that nigger," and they would do it. Then he would tell 'em to put the chain round their neck and throw 'em in the river. I aint heard this — I done seen it.<sup>20</sup>

Although the tremendous repression limited Negro reac-

<sup>20</sup> Botkin (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 248-49.

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tions in the South, there was great activity among Negroes in the North. In the revival of equalitarian ideology attending the Civil War, the Northern states abolished the restrictions on voting for Negroes and otherwise gave them civil rights. Negroes moved into Republican party politics, and some made plans to go South and help organize the Negro politically. The number of Northern Negroes engaged in this activity was small, however; most of them were still trying to hold themselves aloof from anything identified with the ex-slave.

In 1867 the Republican Congress took administration of the defeated South out of the hands of the president and passed a series of laws and amendments to the Constitution which provided the vote and civil rights for the Negro. Southern Negroes were admittedly too weak and ignorant to seek the protection of the laws; hence the federal army, aided by the civilian officers of the Freedmen's Bureau (later represented to the nation by the South as "carpetbaggers"), were instructed to enforce them. This began a tremendous burst of Negro and poor-white activity in the South that was known as the period of Reconstruction, fated to last less than nine years.

Contrary to historical misinterpretation, not many Negroes felt they should run for political office,<sup>21</sup> but most of them wanted to vote and learn what the political issues were. Partly in response to the tremendous demand from Negroes and poor whites, public school systems were set up for the first time in the Southern states. The demand for at least a rudimentary education came from Negro adults as well as from children, and many a parent was taught by his children or went to evening classes. There was talk of eco-

<sup>21</sup> The entire South sent only twenty Negro representatives and two senators to Washington during all the terms between 1867 and 1901 (ten of these men were college trained). Only one state legislature, for one term, had a majority of Negro representatives. (Samuel D. Smith, *The Negro in Congress, 1870-1901* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940], pp. 4-7.)

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nomic reform — of each man getting a new start in life with “forty acres and a mule.” With the new opportunities, some black men rose to positions of prominence, most frequently as teachers but occasionally in other capacities. Others sought new economic opportunities by escaping from the South, although the largest group emigration was that of the forty thousand Negroes who moved to Kansas.<sup>22</sup>

State by state, the old South rapidly recuperated after 1870, and when in 1876 the Republican party made a deal for the presidency by withdrawing all protection from the Negroes, the latter had not progressed far enough to protect themselves. The Restoration, as it was known (referring to the restoration of white supremacy), was swift and extreme. Negroes struggled to maintain their rights and were aided by allies among the poor whites for a while, but by 1890 the South had perfected a new system to subordinate Negroes. This is not the place to recount the details of Restoration, but it was significant for Negro group identification that Negroes were no longer allowed to vote, that they were completely segregated and given the most inferior facilities under the segregated system, that they were regularly and frequently beaten and lynched,<sup>23</sup> and that they were deprived of all but the most menial of jobs.

With the good motives of effecting a compromise and reducing the terror that showed no signs of abatement, a new type of accommodating Negro leadership arose in the South. When the Republican party deserted the Negro, it rendered ineffective the type of protest Negro leadership represented by Frederick Douglass. The new leader was Booker T. Washington, who secured his position not so much by virtue of his occupation as a Negro college principal but by his willingness to act the role of humble ambassador from the

<sup>22</sup> Gunnar Myrdal, with the assistance of Richard Sterner and Arnold Rose, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper, 1944), pp. 186, 1230.

<sup>23</sup> According to Tuskegee Institute figures, the lynching rate was about two hundred per year during the 1890's, and this includes only those who were openly lynched by whole mobs of whites.

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whites to the Negroes. Already marked as a "good nigger," he clinched his position by his famous Atlanta speech in 1895, in which he gave up the Negro demand for social and political equality. Probably no other kind of Negro leadership was possible during those times of terror, and Washington did secure small crumbs in the way of schools and welfare institutions for Negroes. He also did some double talk in order to keep up the spirits of Negroes, as when he denounced segregation laws;<sup>24</sup> but a more typical statement was the following:

I believe the past and present teach but one lesson — to the Negro's friends and to the Negro himself,— that there is but one way out, that there is but one hope of solution; and that is for the Negro in every part of America to resolve from henceforth that he will throw aside every non-essential and cling only to the essential,— that his pillar of cloud by day shall be property, economy, education, and Christian character. To us just now these are the wheat, all else the chaff.<sup>25</sup>

It is noteworthy that from this viewpoint all the Negro could look forward to was a job and a "Christian" — that is, humble — character. He could expect education, but it was clearly understood that beyond the rudimentary "three R's" it was to consist of training in agriculture and domestic science — the subjects taught at Tuskegee — rather than anything "academic." He had to forgo every "non-essential" — that is, the vote, a position of equality, justice in the courts, and so on. Clearly, Negroes could have little pride in race when their aims were so lowly, their leaders so humble. There was no Negro protest worthy of the name between 1890 and 1900.

Furthermore Washington exerted a rigid discipline over

<sup>24</sup> Booker T. Washington, "My Views of Segregation Laws," *New Republic*, 5 (December 4, 1915), 113-14.

<sup>25</sup> *The Future of the American Negro* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1902; first edition, 1899), p. 132.

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all articulate Negroes. By virtue of the power granted him by whites from Theodore Roosevelt on down, Washington could control the appointments and promotions of Negroes to most academic, governmental, and business posts. No Negro institution could secure funds without his consent. He had a whole corps of assistants and secretaries to answer his correspondence in line with his general policies. The "Tuskegee Machine" was ruthless toward any Negro who tried to voice the Negro protest or go against Washington in any way. Forced to be weak in the presence of whites, Washington was arrogant toward other Negroes. Needless to say, Washington also maintained control of the Negro press.<sup>26</sup>

Another Negro voice of the period, although not in any sense that of a leader, was that of William H. Thomas. Thomas was extremely and viciously anti-Negro. He was a Northern mulatto who went South during Reconstruction and became disillusioned. While he could not be said to be characteristic of Negroes, his group hatred was characteristic of the times. A Negro who published anything similar today would be so completely ostracized that he would have no alternative but to hide his identity or commit suicide. Some typical quotations are given from his book published in 1901, *The American Negro*:

The negro represents an intrinsically inferior type of humanity, and one whose predominant characteristics evince an aptitude for a low order of living.

The general unfitness of negro labor for other than the crudest endeavor has been thoroughly demonstrated in the United States and other parts of America where the negro dwells.

One insuperable difficulty confronts any undertaking aimed at

<sup>26</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn* (New York: Harcourt, 1940), pp. 76ff, 86ff. Du Bois here simply repeats a charge he first made in 1904 in the *Boston Guardian*, the one Negro paper that dared to oppose Washington. Also see *ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

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race redemption, if directed by purely negroid agencies, and this is the moral instability of negro character.

The negro has nothing, in word or act, worthy of preservation. Each attribute of his being is obstinately and implacably arrayed against every influence that parts him from sensuous excitement; and when he gives to any uplifting movement verbal assent, he rarely translates speech into action. Wise judgment, therefore, decrees that negro pretensions ought to be suppressed, and his evil propensities eradicated by every available means at command, even though such efforts should end in his virtual extermination.<sup>27</sup>

The writings and activities of these two men — Washington and Thomas — represent a low point in Negro protest and Negro race pride. At a more "popular" level, the so-called "Negro minstrels" represent the same low in Negro morale. To entertain whites, they put on shows the humor of which was at the expense of Negroes in general.<sup>28</sup> The lowness of Negro morale at this time should be considered in relation to the possibilities for high morale. Negroes were now in communication with each other and were not legally divided into slaves and freedmen, and thus there was much more basis for group identification. It was not that group identification was actually less than in slavery times but that it was proportionately less, relative to what it could have been. It is possible, too, that Negroes *felt* it was lower, owing to the absence of the all-repressing slavery. Now there were Negro *advocates* of Negro subservience and inferiority, during a time when Negroes were getting educated and after a period in which they experienced freedom and a rapid rise. Washington represented an accommodation to the new terror used by the white South; Thomas represented the split

<sup>27</sup> William H. Thomas, *The American Negro: A Critical and Practical Discussion*, pp. 70, 139, 154-55, 362-63. Copyright 1901 by the Macmillan Co. Used by permission of the Macmillan Co., publishers.

<sup>28</sup> White entertainers followed the pattern by putting on black make-up. Today probably most "Negro minstrels" are white men in disguise.

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between mulattoes and dark Negroes and between Northern and Southern Negroes.

### THE NEW PROTEST

Some of the young Negro intellectuals were very unhappy about this situation, but none of them dared to do anything about it.<sup>29</sup> The sole significant exception was Monroe Trotter, editor of the *Boston Guardian*, who vigorously and viciously attacked Washington's policies. Although he undoubtedly had the moral support of Northern Negro intellectuals who had not abrogated their interest in the Negro problem, he had little immediate effect. The *Guardian* was founded in 1901; in 1903 a more significant event happened, almost by accident. This was the date of the publication of a book of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk*, by the young and brilliant Negro scholar, W. E. B. Du Bois.

Du Bois was a Northern mulatto, without much childhood contact with the Negro problem, who received a Ph.D. in history from Harvard (1895). He had already achieved a reputation as a scholar and social scientist, and his attitude was objective. The essays in the 1903 book were on miscellaneous topics, written poetically but dispassionately, without the hint of a crusade in them. But one of the essays was entitled "Of Booker T. Washington and Others," and contained a criticism of Washington's theory of vocational education for Negroes. Du Bois was in favor of "classical education," since he believed that progress for Negroes would come from the "talented tenth" of the Negro population. The article created some stir among educated Negroes, but this would have been of short duration had not Du Bois experienced a great deal of organized opposition as a consequence of the article. Du Bois was not the sort of man to take this lying down, and the other Negro intellectuals were about fed up with Washington.

<sup>29</sup> Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, pp. 74-75.



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In the summer of 1905, twenty-nine Negro intellectuals met at Niagara Falls (on Canadian soil, since they met discrimination in the Buffalo hotel at which reservations had been made for the conference). Du Bois was the leader. They hoped to rebuild the Negro protest, following the line of Douglass (although not tying themselves to the Republican party), and to counteract Washington's policy of acknowledging the subservient role of the Negro. These men were not interested in building Negro race pride; in fact, some of them personally tended to look down upon the Negro masses themselves. They were the talented tenth. But they were interested in demanding full equality for Negroes and full integration into American life.

The Niagara movement, as it was called, met three times but accomplished very little. It had no funds at its disposal; it had the opposition of Washington and all his Negro and white friends; and because of that opposition it could not secure the support even of all the educated Negroes. It did, however, succeed in reviving interest in academic education, and, more important, it forced all informed Negroes to take their individual stands in favor of accommodation or protest. Here was a significant issue for Negroes again, one that forced them to raise their thinking about the Negro problem from the personal plane to the level of principle. Morale began to rise in the Negro group, even though it was based not so much on effective opposition to the white enemy as on controversy within the group. Negroes no longer allowed Washington to dictate to them or be their sole mouthpiece.

From 1880 on, white persons of abolitionist tradition had been inactive and had come to consider the Negro a more or less hopeless cause.<sup>30</sup> Whether due to the stimulus of the Niagara movement or not, a race riot in 1908 in Springfield, Illinois, the home of Abraham Lincoln, so stirred the con-

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, W. H. Baldwin, "Present Problems of Negro Education," *Journal of the American Social Science Association*, 37 (December 1899), 48-64.

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sciences of a number of liberal whites that they called upon ". . . all believers in democracy to join in a national conference for the discussion of present evils, the voicing of protests, and the renewal of the struggle for civil and political liberty."<sup>31</sup> The conference met on February 12, 1909, and a permanent protest organization was set up. At a second conference the following year, this white group voted to merge with the Niagara movement, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was the name given to the new organization.

The interracial character of the NAACP was a great help to the Negro liberals of the Niagara movement. The whites provided funds, powerful contacts, additional skills, and an optimistic spirit. In their close association with the whites through the new organization, especially in its local branches, Negroes gained a broader conception of themselves and of American culture. This was the first time in American history that a significant body of Negroes was in intimate and equalitarian relationship with a significant body of whites. True enough, only the talented tenth were immediately affected, but the new ideas and the new spirit spread throughout the masses of Negroes. While at first all the officers except Du Bois and most of the directors were white, Negroes felt that it was a Negro organization because Negro members were equals, because they soon learned that they could trust it to fight for Negro rights, and, above all, because Du Bois set the tone of the organization from his position as director of publicity and research. Within a few years the organization was known to most Negroes, even in isolated areas, and, although from time to time there has been opposition to its specific policies and to certain of its officers, there has been practically no challenging of the organization as such.<sup>32</sup> The

<sup>31</sup> From the invitation to the conference, prepared by Oswald Garrison Villard, January 1909.

<sup>32</sup> The major exception was Marcus Garvey, who hated the NAACP and all it stood for. Garvey will be considered on subsequent pages.

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ideology of the NAACP, which was derived from the Negro and white abolitionists, has been taken over by all Negro leaders and Negro betterment organizations, except those dominated by Communism.

The NAACP set as its chief aim the securing of equal application of the law to Negroes and of the conformance of laws to the Constitution. When the NAACP came into existence the Southern states had all sorts of laws in direct violation of the United States Constitution, and they seldom bothered to apply to Negroes their laws for the benefit and protection of their citizens. In the North, civil rights laws were often overlooked by local governments and private firms. The United States Supreme Court had so perverted the original and clear intent of the Fourteenth Amendment, adopted after the Civil War to prevent the states from infringing on the rights, liberty, and property of Negro citizens, that it referred to the amendment primarily to prevent the states from interfering with private corporations (beginning with the Santa Clara decision in 1886).

The NAACP thus saw its function in combating the terror of the South and in providing legal security for Negroes. It is not a legal aid society, however, for its purpose is not to help individuals but to set precedents. It has fought steadily and with great success, but its goal is far from achieved. There is still terror in the South and Negroes are not accorded the full protection of American laws. Yet each success of the NAACP has raised the morale of Negroes a notch and has brought the Negro protest to a higher level. One of its first successes was getting the Supreme Court to outlaw the "grandfather clauses" (1915), those obfuscations of the guarantee of a vote to every citizen provided by the Fifteenth Amendment. Its most recent successes, in cases won in 1944 and 1947, have been the outlawing of "white primaries," which are also clearly against the purpose of the same amendment. The fact that many of its "successes" have

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been followed by a new growth of legal obstacles illustrates the difficulty facing the NAACP, and indicates why some Negroes are cynical about using the legal approach.<sup>33</sup>

Another very outstanding interracial organization was formed in 1911, the National Urban League.<sup>34</sup> It was established at first only in Northern cities and set its aim to secure economic opportunities for Negroes — decent jobs, equal pay, and equal chances for advancement. It was not as much a protest organization as the NAACP, since it secured most of its funds from community chests rather than from dues and gifts, and since its white leaders were largely motivated by the Quaker religion rather than by the abolitionist tradition. However, it did much to provide economic security for Negroes and to help them get housing and a minimum of public welfare. It was especially important when Negroes began to migrate northward in tremendous numbers, and when the Great Depression dispossessed half the Negroes of their jobs. In its quiet way it thus provided the Negro with something of an anchor and a refuge in time of greatest need, and it helped him get the means with which he could strengthen his backbone and make his own protest. In recent years the Urban League has moved into some Southern cities, but its largest operations are still in the North.

The third large interracial organization was the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, organized in 1919. Although it did several things to improve the position of Negroes in

<sup>33</sup> Parallel cases are those related to segregation in housing. In 1917 the NAACP won the case of *Buchanan vs. Warley* in the Supreme Court, which rendered illegal any state laws or municipal ordinances to segregate residences. But white property owners made private compacts — called restrictive covenants — not to sell to Negroes and accomplished the same end as the laws that had been declared unconstitutional. It took the NAACP until 1947 to bring a clear-cut case all the way to the Supreme Court to test the constitutionality of the restrictive covenant. The case was won in 1948, when restrictive covenants were ruled to be legally unenforceable; but there was little immediate change in residential segregation.

<sup>34</sup> The original name of the league was the National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes. It had some predecessors dating back to 1906.

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the South, it worked within the Southern framework, even to the partial segregation of the Negro and white leaders within it, and thus never captured the imagination of any large group of Negroes. Also, unlike the NAACP and the Urban League, it avoided certain kinds of publicity as detrimental to its efforts. It did not say publicly that it was working for Negroes, but rather that it was working to raise Southern standards, in accord with the Southern spirit. Thus it had only the most indirect influence in raising Negro morale and group identification. The commission merged into the newly formed Southern Regional Council in 1944.

The Negro press was considerably older than the organizations, but it had to wait until Negroes were literate and protesting before it became important. The first Negro newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, was begun in 1827 in New York, and before the Civil War twenty-three other papers were at least started.<sup>35</sup> The papers were abolitionist, but they protested not only against slavery but also against the lack of civil rights for Negroes in the North. Naturally they were outlawed in the South, but a few of them — *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, for example — had some white readers in the North. After the Civil War the Negro newspaper gained a Southern circulation, and with the increasing literacy of the population the circulation rose. In 1870 there were only about 10 Negro newspapers in the United States; in 1880 there were 31; and in 1890 there were 154.<sup>36</sup> Most of these papers had a small circulation and many did not last long. The papers published after the Civil War were not nearly as militant as those published earlier. At first they were organs for the Republican party; later their policy was set by Booker T. Washington.

The modern pattern of militant protest was begun by

<sup>35</sup> Frederick G. Detweiler, *The Negro Press in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922), p. 39.

<sup>36</sup> Irvine Garland Penn, *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors* (Springfield, Mass.: Willey and Co., 1891), pp. 112-14.

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Monroe Trotter with the *Boston Guardian* (1901), although he was simply reviving the Negro abolitionist tradition. A paper that was to have much more influence later, the *Chicago Defender*,<sup>37</sup> was started in 1905 by Robert S. Abbott. In 1910 the NAACP established the first influential Negro magazine, the *Crisis*, edited by Du Bois. Soon after, most of the Negro newspapers and magazines took on the protest motif. The Negro newspaper became the Negro's weekly shot of racial adrenalin. Some of the newspapers—like the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and the *Baltimore Afro-American*—and two of the magazines—the NAACP's *Crisis* and the Urban League's *Opportunity*—developed large, national circulations and thus served further to unify the Negro people.

### THE GREAT MIGRATION AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Except for the concerted movement of about forty thousand Southern Negroes to Kansas shortly after the Civil War, there was no significant migration to the North or West from 1865 to 1915. This is hard to explain when terror and caste were so strong in the South, while the North gave Negroes the vote, practical equality in justice, good schools, and other public welfare benefits. Among the possible reasons for Negroes' not moving out of the South were the lack of sufficient job opportunities in the North, the lack of a tradition of migration, the lack of contacts in the North to ease the adjustment period, and the lack of train fare. But another reason must also be included—the low morale of the Negroes. They were held by the terror; they believed the myth

<sup>37</sup> It was no easy task to start a Negro newspaper in those days. Negroes did not have capital, experience, or business connections. The *Defender*, now having the third largest circulation of all Negro newspapers, was started on a shoestring: "With a quarter as starting capital, Abbott had bought some tablet paper, persuaded his landlady to let him use her kitchen, borrowed some money to pay a printer, and the *Chicago Defender* was born on May 5, 1905." (Metz T. P. Lochard, "Robert S. Abbott—'Race Leader,'" *Phylon*, VIII [Second Quarter 1947], 124.)

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that the only occupations they would ever be fitted for were those of farm hand and servant; and they were afraid to find out how to travel and how to find a place to live when they arrived.

The new protest movement beginning around 1910 helped to raise morale, and the demands of war industry in 1915 provided economic opportunities. Thereafter Negroes migrated northward in tremendous numbers. The Negro newspapers were a great aid. The *Chicago Defender*, for example, not only propagandized for migration but printed train schedules, railroad rates, and gave other detailed information that migrants would need to know. It described in glowing and exaggerated terms the advantages of the North; it printed advertisements of specific jobs.

The upswing of migration began in 1915; it continued unabated until 1930, and even during the depression the rate dropped only slightly. Thus migration was not a temporary response to the needs of Northern war industry; it was also a permanent expression of the Negro protest. Escape from the South was a protest against the South, and the escape allowed an increase in protest. The Negroes who migrated did not forget about the South; rather they used the new freedom of the North to articulate their grievances, to contribute to protest organizations, and to urge the remaining Southern Negroes to migrate. It was shortly after the beginning of the Great Migration that practically the entire Negro press took on its contemporary mass appeal and protest character. At the same time the NAACP grew almost to the status of a mass organization among Northern Negroes. The migration brought other changes that indirectly raised the Negroes' morale—it increased their wealth, raised their living standards, gave them access to good public education, offered them political power through the use of the vote, encouraged them to be efficient and, to a certain extent, to

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try and rise economically, and provided them with a sense of security for their lives and property.

The United States' entry into the war in 1917 created a problem for Negroes. To what extent should they stifle their protest in order to devote their energies and morale to the war effort? This was not just a generalized question—it involved such specific problems as whether they should volunteer for an army in which they would be segregated and discriminated against; whether they should stop protesting against the war industries that hired Negroes for menial positions only; whether they should wait in line until all whites had been served first when buying war bonds. Their decision was to support the war wholeheartedly, at the expense of deferring their own protest. One reason for this was the obvious material advantages the war brought to Negroes. Despite segregation and discrimination against them in the armed forces and war industry, there were also new opportunities and new experiences.

In addition to this selfish motive, Negroes were impressed by the democratic reasons for which the war was fought. When Wilson said that the United States was fighting the war to make the world safe for democracy, Negroes felt that some of this democracy might affect them too. It was a war against tyranny, and Negroes could temporarily forget one fight while they finished another. Du Bois, who by 1918 was recognized generally to be the outstanding Negro leader, expressed this attitude in a very influential editorial in the *Crisis*:

We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German power represents spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all dark races for equality, freedom and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while the war lasts, forget our special grievances and close ranks shoulder to shoulder with our white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice,



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but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills.<sup>38</sup>

### RACE PRIDE AND NATIONALISM

The years immediately following World War I were deeply disillusioning for all Americans. For Negro Americans this was especially true. Not only did they witness the display of selfish national and international politics, but they also experienced some of the bloodiest race riots in the history of the country, and they lost many of the good jobs they had gained during the war. White Americans reacted with isolationism and cynicism; Negro Americans reacted with radicalism and nationalism. For white Americans the 1920's were a period of low group feeling and low morale, as seen in the high rates of personal and social disorganization. For Negroes, however, group feeling and morale continued to rise.

The outstanding change in Negro attitudes immediately after the war was the acquisition of "race pride." Of course Negroes had always taken a certain amount of pride in their race, even if only because they believed they did not manifest so much self-flaunting and aggressiveness as the whites. But a sense of tradition was lacking; slavery had lost for Negroes their past. Now, however, Negro historians began to rediscover that past. In 1915 there was organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, which published the *Journal of Negro History*. The editor of the *Journal* and leader of this Negro History movement is Carter G. Woodson. Woodson and his followers and imitators are historians with a purpose. They have not been content merely to dig out the forgotten facts of Negro history. They have been further concerned with publicizing these facts so that Negroes would know about them, feel a sense of security in their relationship with the past, and be proud of the Negro

<sup>38</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, "Close the Ranks," *Crisis*, 16 (July 1918), 111. Needless to say, this was not the only attitude Negroes took toward the war, but it was a dominant one.

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race. As a contemporary Negro scholar puts it: “. . . Negro History is quite different from the study of the Negro. Frankly, the former differs from the latter in that Negro History has a *purpose* which is built upon a *faith*.”<sup>39</sup> And Arthur A. Schomburg, the Negro bibliophile, said: “For him [the Negro], a group tradition must supply compensation for persecution, and pride of race the antidote for prejudice. History must restore what slavery took away, for it is the social damage of slavery that the present generation must repair and offset.”<sup>40</sup>

The association summarizes its historical research in popular form to make it available to Negro newspapers and Negro organizations. During Negro History Week every year there are public exhibits illustrating the major facts, and a special effort is made to reach Negro children through the schools. Affiliated with the association is a group called the Associated Publishers, which publishes both scholarly and popular books on the Negro and has scores of agents to sell them, at low cost, to Negroes of all social classes.

The articles in the *Journal of Negro History* and the books put out by the Associated Publishers are, for the most part, based on sound historical scholarship. At worst, there is some exaggeration and misplaced emphasis, but this distortion is no greater than that found in the writings of outstanding white historians whenever they deal with the Negro. On the other hand, a certain amount of pseudo-history has also come to be associated with the Negro History movement. Some writers and speakers are so much more concerned with the propaganda value of history than with its accuracy that they are willing to make almost any sort of misstatement or misinterpretation.

While scholars and pseudo-scholars were having a certain

<sup>39</sup> Lawrence Reddick, “A New Interpretation for Negro History,” *Journal of Negro History*, 22 (January 1937), 17.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted by Roi Ottley, *New World A-Coming* (Boston: Houghton, 1943), p. 101.

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influence in creating nationalism among Negroes during and after World War I, one man came along who had the same purpose but dispensed with scholarship completely—and had much more effect. Marcus Garvey was a dark-skinned Negro from the West Indies who had been in the United States for only a few years when he started the Universal Negro Improvement Association, a blatant racist and nationalist organization which pulled out all the stops in its appeal to race consciousness.<sup>41</sup> Negro intellectuals approved of and contributed to the Negro History movement, but they were appalled by Garvey. He did not waste much time with them, either, calling them mulattoes and snobs and causing a considerable decline in the popular support of the NAACP. Garvey did succeed, however, in creating the first and only real mass movement among the great bulk of lower-class Negroes.

Garvey's primary appeal was a glorification of blackness. He condemned amalgamation with whites and told Negroes to keep their blood pure.<sup>42</sup> Black was superior to white, and God and Jesus were declared to be black. He used the appeal to Negro history, too, pointing out that Africa had civilization long before Europe did. He looked forward to the renewal of Negro leadership in world civilization and urged all Negroes to plan to return to Africa. The slogan "Africa for Africans" was popular not so much because American Negroes wanted to go to Africa, but because there was much talk generally after World War I about self-determination for subject peoples. Garvey created the "Empire of Africa" in 1921 and made himself its provisional President-General. To assist him, he created the positions of Potentate and Supreme Deputy Potentate, and a nobility consisting of Knights

<sup>41</sup> The story of Garvey and his movement may be found in Ira De A. Reid, *The Negro Immigrant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), pp. 147–55.

<sup>42</sup> The appeals used by Garvey are brought together in Amy Jacques Garvey (ed.), *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (New York: Universal Publishing House, 1923).

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of the Nile, Knights of the Distinguished Service Order of Ethiopia, and Dukes of the Niger and of Uganda. The new nation needed a military arm, so Garvey founded the Universal African Legion and the Universal Black Eagle Flying Corps — both with uniforms and officers. His most expensive enterprise was the Black Star Line of steamships.

Although all these activities were centered in New York City, there were local branches all over the country. Garvey claimed six million adherents, but this figure was undoubtedly exaggerated. Garvey's newspaper, the *Negro World*, reached every corner of the country. His organization was in the nature of an American fraternal order, except that he also built such commercial enterprises as grocery stores, laundries, restaurants, hotels, printing plants, and steamship lines. Garvey followed Washington in believing that Negroes must become economically independent. The effect of his organization was much greater than that of a mere fraternal order, since it made strong appeals to nationalism and race pride. The movement declined after 1923, not because Garvey's followers were disaffected, but because Garvey had become entangled in long-drawn-out legal suits as a consequence of the failure of his steamship line. He was convicted in 1925 and after two years' service in a federal penitentiary was deported as an undesirable alien. The movement was split between rival claimants and lost membership rapidly, although a few small religious sects and protest groups remain to this day. Its permanent effect on the bulk of the Negro masses was to instill race pride and aspirations for Africa into their group identification.

There is a certain similarity between Marcus Garvey and Theodor Herzl, an early leader of Zionist Jews.<sup>43</sup> In their early years, neither had been exposed to very strong anti-minority feelings. When they came in contact with prejudice,

<sup>43</sup> The traits of Herzl noted here are taken from the general literature and from Hannah Arendt, "The Jewish State: Fifty Years After," *Commentary*, 1 (May 1946), 1-8.

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their reaction was to plan in terms of escape to a land where there would be no discrimination, rather than to protest and try to change things in the existing situation. Both men made their strongest appeal in terms of nationalism. Both condemned amalgamation and assimilation. Both assumed they could gain support from those most strongly prejudiced against their respective minority groups. Garvey secured the open support of E. S. Cox of the Ku Klux Klan and of John Powell of the Anglo-Saxon clubs.<sup>44</sup> Both Cox and Powell spoke several times before Garvey's group and praised the back-to-Africa movement, especially its race purity program. Garvey claimed that potentially every white man is a Klansman and that therefore it was easier to deal with those who openly were so. Similarly, Herzl said that every non-Jew was potentially an anti-Semite and that the out-and-out anti-Semites were easier to work with.

Although Garvey began his work more than twenty years after Herzl published his *Judenstaat*, it is likely that he knew nothing of Herzl and that the similarity between the two simply reflects the similarity in reaction of two oppressed minority groups. Rejection by the majority group manifested itself, for some members of each minority, in nationalism and race consciousness. It is equally significant, however, that the movements founded by the two men have taken entirely different paths: the Garvey movement is now all but dead, whereas Zionism — since the Nazi persecutions — has become the dominant reaction of the Jews against prejudice. Jews are actually moving to Palestine, but, according to Ottley, the vast majority of Negroes "had no idea of leaving the United States." The effect of the Garvey movement was this:

The dream of an all-black nation had simply given a sorely-driven people a new and abundant dignity, enough to squander. Concretely, the movement set in motion what was to become the most compelling force in Negro life — race and color conscious-

<sup>44</sup> Ottley, *'New World A-Coming,'* p. 74.

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ness, which is today that ephemeral thing that inspires "race loyalty"; the banner to which Negroes rally; the chain that binds them together.<sup>45</sup>

These same aims were held by the Negro press and by Negro intellectuals, even those who had opposed Garvey for the irrationality of his propaganda. Du Bois, for example, wrote several books to glorify Africa and to suggest its future role in world affairs. Countee Cullen, an outstanding Negro poet, used the theme of the black Christ several times. The Negro press makes frequent reference to Africa and uses nationalist as well as democratic appeals. The interest of American Negroes in Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia was motivated not solely by concern for the underdog but also by the fact that the underdog was African. Thus nationalist and racist symbols have become important for Negroes and have materially increased their race pride and group identification.

### RADICALISM AND THE "NEW NEGRO" MOVEMENT

Intellectuals did not participate in the Garvey movement but sought, unsuccessfully, to appeal to the Negro masses in other ways. Some of them went in for socialism and tried to get Negro workers interested in joining with white workers in a common front against capitalists. At least four Negro newspapers were organized to spread this message. Among the editors was A. Philip Randolph, who was later to become the outstanding labor leader of Negroes. The appeal had little effect, partly because the only way Negroes could get jobs in industry was by pleasing the employers, and because white workers were not at all friendly to Negroes.

During the 1930's the same appeal was made by two wide-

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81. It is perhaps an interesting footnote for the psychologist that many adherents of Garvey have joined the Father Divine movement (*ibid.*, p. 99), even though the appeals are almost opposite: universalism instead of nationalism, brotherhood with whites instead of aggression, security in this country instead of moving to Africa.

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ly different groups with somewhat greater success. The Communists not only attracted a number of Negro intellectuals but also secured the sympathy of a significant minority of Negro workers, especially the unemployed ones.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, the C.I.O. actually gave Negroes equality in its industrial unions and discouraged race discrimination among both white employers and white workers. In consequence Negroes joined the C.I.O. in great numbers. By this time Randolph was partisan to neither of these groups; he was one of the first outstanding Negro leaders to repudiate the Communists publicly, and his strategy of remaining in the A.F. of L. prevented him from expressing his sympathy with the C.I.O.

Other intellectuals were engaging in a type of activity that was to have a more immediate effect on both Negroes and whites. This was an outpouring of creative talent in literature, the fine arts, music (both serious and popular), and the other arts—activities that became known as the “New Negro” movement. It began around 1910, but it did not motivate significant numbers of Negroes to creative endeavor, or become popularized, until the early 1920's. The movement was encouraged primarily by the editors of the *Crisis* and *Opportunity*—Du Bois and Charles S. Johnson—and reached its pinnacle in the volume edited by Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (1925).<sup>47</sup> Although these new artists were Negroes and much of their work was in the tradition of Negro protest and race pride, the movement was, in a sense, sponsored by whites. Some of the white sponsors were rich and were seeking only to foster something that was different and personally stimulating; others were artists and writers who felt they had discovered a new type of creative work.

Besides opening up new economic opportunities for a small number of Negroes, the major effect of the New Negro

<sup>46</sup> Drake and Cayton, *op. cit.*, pp. 734–37.

<sup>47</sup> This book was an outgrowth of a special edition of the *Survey Graphic*, a social service magazine generally edited by a white man.

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movement on Negroes was to give them the realization that they had certain abilities that could impress even whites. This produced a new type of race pride — the average Negro now identified himself with those Negroes who were receiving the applause of whites and thus achieved an enhanced group identification. The personal contact with whites on an equalitarian basis also created, as in the case of interracial organizations, a widening perspective on the Negroes' own group.

Moreover, the content of the art or writing often expressed protest or Negro nationalism and thus served, like any other propaganda, to stimulate group feeling on the part of the average Negro. The vitriolic poetry ranged from the cynical and comic to the dignified battle call:

She thinks that even up in heaven  
Her class lies late and snores,  
While poor black cherubs rise at seven  
To do celestial chores.<sup>48</sup>

Oh, kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;  
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
Pressed to the wall, dying, but — fighting back!<sup>49</sup>

Even though the New Negro movement declined during the early 1930's, owing to the waning interest and pocketbooks of the whites, Negroes were now established in certain fields of creative endeavor and continued to produce, thus giving more ordinary Negroes a sense of group pride.

### THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

By the 1930's, Negroes' group identification was so strong that the lack of job opportunities in the North barely af-

<sup>48</sup> "For a Lady I Know," from *Color*, by Countee Cullen (copyright 1925 by Harper and Brothers), p. 50.

<sup>49</sup> Claude McKay, "If We Must Die," from *Harlem Shadows* (New York: Harcourt, 1922).



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fectured their migration there from the South. It was not a migration born of hopelessness, like that other depression migration of the white Okies to California, since the Negroes felt that they were moving to freedom if not to jobs. The depression reduced the funds available to the Negro organizations and the Negro press, but that did not materially decrease or change the character of their activities and protest. The depression cut down the paying audiences of the Negro poet, musician, and artist, but it did not stifle his creativity—he simply went into the federal government's work relief program and there continued to produce. Radicalism increased among Negroes during the depression, but for most of them it was just another form of the Negro protest. The white Communists were willing to give Negroes even fuller social equality than the intellectuals, the artists, and the abolitionist liberals had been, and this provided a major source of attraction.

A shift in voting behavior that occurred during the 1930's reveals the great extent to which group identification had grown among Negroes. In the past Negroes had always voted for the Republican party, which had given them Emancipation, Reconstruction, and a small but continuing political patronage. However, the Republican party had officially renounced attempts to secure political equality for Negroes in 1876, and later, Republican President Taft had further abjured Negroes in his effort to build a white Republican party in the South. More recently, Republican President Hoover had continued to develop the "lily-white" movement. Nevertheless the overwhelming majority of Negroes who were allowed to vote voted Republican, more because of tradition than because they expected the Republicans to do anything for them. The first Negro congressman to be elected since 1898 was a Republican, Oscar De Priest, elected by Chicago Negroes in 1928. His election was a sign to Negroes that they were rising again, and he was aggressive and capable enough to make them proud of him. North-

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ern Negroes were also securing other, more minor, elective and appointive posts, but by Hoover's time, Negroes held practically none of the middle or higher federal appointments in the South and only a small proportion of the lower ones.

It was during Hoover's administration that Negroes secured their first national political victory, but it was by opposing the president. In 1930 Hoover appointed Judge John Parker, a Southerner, to the United States Supreme Court. Negroes had reason to believe that Judge Parker was anti-Negro (although his impartiality has since been demonstrated), and they set up a campaign to prevent his confirmation in the Senate. The effort was prodigious, and Judge Parker was not confirmed. This success gave many Negroes their first realization of the possibilities of organized protest.<sup>50</sup>

There was some protest voting against "lily-white Hoover" in 1932. There is evidence that 25 per cent, or even more, of the Negro voters in Northern cities voted for the Democratic candidate for president, Franklin D. Roosevelt.<sup>51</sup> When the new president came into office with his general reforms for the underdog and his relatively equalitarian policy for the Negro, a large number of Negroes switched their party affiliation to vote for him in 1936 and again in 1940 and 1944. The estimated proportion of Negroes voting for Roosevelt in Chicago rose from 23 per cent in 1932 to 52 per cent in 1940;<sup>52</sup> in Detroit it rose from 36.7 per cent in 1932 to 69.3 per cent in 1940.<sup>53</sup> Probably no other American group proved to be so mobile politically. The significance of the shift was

<sup>50</sup> For a statement on the turning-point significance of the Parker fight, see Walter White, *A Man Called White* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), p. 113.

<sup>51</sup> Myrdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 494-96.

<sup>52</sup> Elmer W. Henderson, "A Study of the Basic Factors Involved in the Change in the Party Alignment of Negroes in Chicago, 1932-1938" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1939), pp. 19-21; and H. F. Gosnell, "The Negro Vote in Northern Cities," *National Municipal Review*, 30 (May 1941), 267.

<sup>53</sup> Edward H. Litchfield, "A Case Study of Negro Political Behavior in Detroit," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 5 (June 1941), 271.

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that a sizable proportion of Northern Negroes were now prepared to bargain their votes for the benefit of the Negro group. White politicians are aware of this, and Negroes' knowledge of this awareness enhances their group self-esteem.

Negroes did not vote radical in the depression. In 1932 only 1.5 per cent of the Negroes in Detroit voted for a party other than the Democratic or Republican—a percentage equal to that of native whites and lower than that of foreign-born groups.<sup>54</sup> Gosnell estimated that in Chicago only 500 Negroes joined the Communist party during the depression,<sup>55</sup> and in Cleveland, Davis set the figure at only 200 Negro party members, even at the height of the depression.<sup>56</sup> However, many more Negroes were sympathetic to the Communist party, for it offered them a political, economic, and social system opposed to that prevailing in the United States. Showing sympathy toward the Communists was another way of expressing the Negro protest.

One specific way in which the Communists influenced the Negroes was to encourage them to pool their diverse organizational activities and merge into one large organization. The National Negro Congress was created in 1935; it represented eighty-five Negro organizations, including the NAACP, and was headed by A. Philip Randolph, the Socialist union leader. Local councils were established in many cities and they, as well as the national organization, were very active in expressing the Negro protest. Only Negroes were admitted to membership in the congress. It seemed like the beginning of a real mass movement, and Negroes were much heartened by its formation. However, a struggle for leadership by the Communists soon developed, and by 1940 they had won.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>55</sup> H. F. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. 352.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Ralph Bunche, "The Political Status of the Negro," unpublished manuscript prepared for the Carnegie-Myrdal Study, Vol. VI, pp. 1289-90.

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Randolph was forced out of the presidency and most of the sponsoring organizations withdrew. The organization lost membership and remained largely a paper "front" for the Communist party during the war. In 1945, however, the National Negro Congress began to revive, and Negroes came in as a protest against the reaction that followed the war.

Another type of extreme protest, which became a sort of fascism, developed among Negroes during the 1930's. It began innocently and spontaneously as a Jobs-for-Negroes campaign against white-owned stores in Negro neighborhoods in large Northern cities. Unless these stores hired Negro workers, they were picketed and boycotted under the slogan, "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work!" In New York City the white merchants either ignored the campaign, played along with it, or sought injunctions to stop the picketing, and the movement was demoralized. Nationalistic demagogues capitalized on the situation by charging the movement's leaders with not being aggressive enough. One of these called himself Sufi Abdul Hamid and went around Harlem garbed in a turban, green velvet blouse, Sam Browne belt, riding habit, patent-leather boots, black, crimson-lined cape, and wearing a brown beard.<sup>57</sup> He harangued the crowds and established an organization that soon was large enough to enable him to bludgeon small storekeepers into paying him tribute for protection against violence. The campaign took over anti-Semitism as a major weapon, since a good proportion of Harlem's storekeepers were Jewish. Sufi was brought into court for fomenting racial strife between Jews and Negroes. Released after a three-day trial, he went into other bizarre activities, but soon afterward was killed in an airplane accident.

Ira Kemp and Arthur Reed took over the campaign of Jobs-for-Negroes and anti-Semitism. They extended their attack to include not only Harlem merchants but Jewish labor

<sup>57</sup> The facts in this and the following paragraph are taken from Ottley, *'New World A-Coming,'* pp. 113-21.

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leaders and Bronx housewives. Ottley alleges that they flirted with the fascist Christian Front movement. Reed was able to reach the business element of Harlem, since he advocated the development of Negro business, and he secured the tacit support of at least one important Negro newspaper. Even though the movement resorted to distributing anti-Semitic handbills and using thugs, it achieved such influence that the Republican party ran Ira Kemp as its candidate for the state assembly, and he nearly won. Kemp died shortly thereafter, but Reed still agitates and the Jobs campaign continues.

In other Northern cities also there were campaigns against storekeepers in Negro neighborhoods. They whipped up a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and often had at least a partial degree of success in attaining their immediate objective. Not all the campaigns had such colorful leaders as the one in New York did, however. The one in Washington, D.C., deliberately tried to avoid anti-Semitism and to focus attention on the big chain stores. There is no doubt that these movements enhanced Negro nationalism, race protest, and group identification at least in the Northern cities, even though they sometimes resorted to thuggery and race prejudice.

The new Negro spirit was perhaps revealed by the appearance of a new pattern in race riots during the 1930's. Before World War I, riots were little more than massacres of helpless Negroes by gangs of whites (for example, the Atlanta riot of 1906). In the wave of riots immediately after the war, Negroes organized and fought back, killing almost as many whites as there were Negroes killed (for example, the Chicago riot of 1919). This became the usual pattern of riot and was manifested as recently as the Detroit riot of 1942. In Harlem in 1935, however, following an incident in which a Negro boy was arrested for stealing in a store, the population got excited, destroyed property, and looted. A definite feeling of anti-Semitism was manifested during this

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riot and has been generally present during riots, among Northern Negroes at least, ever since.

A much more healthy phenomenon for society was the contribution to the race pride of the Negro masses made by the pugilistic success of Joe Louis. Joe Louis had been born in Alabama and had worked in a Detroit factory; thus, unlike most of the other Negro successes, he was one of the lower class at the time of his victory in 1935. This fight was with Primo Carnera, an Italian, and the time was during the Italo-Ethiopian war, when Negro sympathies were strongly with the darker contender. When Louis won, Negroes celebrated publicly, at least in the North.

When a Negro is a success, it is credited not only to him, but to the whole race. Close track is kept of Negroes who have been successful in all fields, but especially in those in which Negroes excell in competition with white men. For another thing, the Negro feels that achievement by a Negro breaks down the prevailing opinions of the Negro's inferiority. Actually, though, Negro achievement has an even more positive effect upon Negroes themselves. It is indeed a shot in the arm which helps to tear away inner feelings of inadequacy, and thus to quicken the social advancement of the entire race.

Joe was acclaimed by Negroes everywhere — even indeed by black men in the West Indies, South America, and Africa. All manner of honors were showered on him. He was made a director of the Victory Life Insurance Company, a Negro company was called "Brown Bomber," a title given him by the press. Clubs, societies, and babies were named after him, and from Harlem to Atlanta, testimonial dinners were given in his honor by members of his race. The Southern Negro Youth Congress awarded him a plaque as the country's most outstanding Negro youth. Enterprising men did a profitable business selling pictures, buttons, busts, and statuettes of Joe. From the Deep South came streams of letters. "God bless you, Joe Louis," a typical one read. "You've given us hope. Keep on."

. . . He gave the little fellow of the race the long-awaited chance to shout and yell — and indeed to brag and boast. But he

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also gave Negroes confidence which enabled them to meet with increased authority their day-to-day problems. . . . The Pittsburgh *Courier* held that Louis "lifted an entire race out of the slough of inferiority, and gave them a sense of self-importance." There is perhaps a little yeast contained in that statement, but it is a fact that Joe gave a decided lift to the Negro's morale by stimulating a more positive outlook on American life.<sup>58</sup>

Louis' honesty and modesty have made him especially fitted to be a model, and the circumstances of his victory over Schmeling, whom the Nazis lauded as an example of German superiority and who first beat Louis, made him a national hero. There were great Negro athletes before Louis, like Jack Johnson and Jesse Owens, and great Negro athletes since Louis first secured the heavyweight championship, like Jackie Robinson; but none has done more to stimulate race pride and group identification.

By the 1940's Negroes had achieved a remarkable group identification. There were great divisions among them, and important divisive forces affected them—forces which we have largely neglected thus far in our history but to which we shall give special attention in the next chapter. Yet despite the divisions, most Negroes are now aware of anything that happens in the country that violates the rights of one of them. A significant number can be counted on to protest whenever some important injustice befalls the group. For example, when the recent war boom created a demand for workers and Negroes were not hired, A. Philip Randolph was able, in a few months, to organize the March-on-Washington movement, with local affiliates that had several mass meetings. Millions of Negroes were involved. By threatening to have Negroes from all over the country march to Washington to protest the economic discrimination, Randolph finally forced a reluctant President Roosevelt to order that no war contracts would be given to industries that refused

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 189-90.

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to stop discrimination, and to create a Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) to enforce the order.

Negroes also have had a great growth of race pride. In fact, some of them now have the trait in pathological form—for some, the glorification of the Negro group is considered to be the main purpose of Negro activity. Radicalism and nationalism have become associated with race pride. This is understandable in view of the history we have considered, and in view of the caste situation; but nevertheless it goes against the equalitarian principles of American democracy and sometimes hurts the Negro's own welfare. We shall expand on this value judgment at a later point; here it will suffice to give illustrations of the extremes to which race pride has risen. A prominent Negro newspaper columnist and one of the most widely read authors of books for a mass Negro audience has built part of his reputation on such news as that Beethoven, Haydn, Dumas, and the King of Sweden are Negroes. The Negro press, in addition to providing an excellent sounding board for the Negro protest, appeals to its readers with stories like one about the first Negro quartermaster company that happened to land on a completely safe island in the Pacific Ocean. In trying to get jobs for Negroes and in urging Negroes to buy from Negro businessmen, respectable Negro leaders as well as demagogues tell their audiences that they are a race much superior to the Jews. Great prominence is given to a story from Ethiopia that that country does not want a loan from the United States.

These appeals to mediocrity and to race prejudice, this pride in the cultural achievements of people with whom they have no cultural connection, this claiming as group members persons who could be Negroes only in purely racial terms (even though the facts are probably true) — all these appeals are just the sort of thing Negroes have been protesting against when done by white men. In thus accepting



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the racist premises of prejudiced whites, many Negroes are unconsciously accepting the conclusions of that kind of thinking. To believe that cultural products are outgrowths of biological race, and that races can be ranked as biologically inferior and superior, must unconsciously confirm Negroes' feelings of inferiority and group self-hatred.

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ANYTHING that divides a group tends to cut down on the ability of its members to identify themselves with the group as a whole. Also, any identification of its members with an outside group will reduce group identification, as will preoccupation with personal concerns at the expense of group concerns. It is such barriers to complete group identification that we shall consider in this chapter.

#### CLASS AND COLOR

We have already mentioned the division that existed between freedmen, house slaves, and field slaves before the Civil War. This became a class division after the war and, for a long time, was also associated with differences in color. It would not be relevant here to discuss the bases of class among Negroes — wealth, occupation, education, and so on — except to mention that these factors are given somewhat different weight among Negroes than among whites. Their effects in causing division are somewhat similar to their effects among whites, except that with Negroes “race” is the dominant fact, in spite of class differences. For instance, when one young man in a town secures a college education, there may be envy on the part of other Negroes in the town, but there is also pride and a sense of group accomplishment. This is true even when the favored Negro is a complete stranger. Of course, if he seems snobbish — “dicty,” as the Negroes say — he may also be resented. But, on the whole, if it were not for certain concomitants that are associated with class, class would not be as important a divisive influence among Negroes as among whites.

One of these concomitants is the fact that it is practically

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impossible for the child of a Southern sharecropper to get an education or rise in the economic scale. While this is true for whites, too, it is even more true for Negroes. The situation is comparable to that of the immigrant who looks at his rising children and says, "I never had a chance to get ahead as you do." It is with some such thought that the son of a sharecropper regards the son of a city mail carrier, except that the two are of the same generation, unlike the immigrant and his son. Thus the fact that it takes the poor Southern Negro at least two generations to rise, while the poor Northern Negro can rise in one generation, creates a minor form of cleavage among Negroes.

The distinction between Northern and Southern Negroes itself is important, although it was more so a decade or two ago than it is today. Again the situation is comparable to that of the immigrant—for a Negro, the number of generations his forebears have been in the North is often as important as the number of generations a white man's forebears have been in the United States. Northern Negroes used to hold themselves aloof from the migrants, but since the latter now outnumber the former and since whites make no such distinction between Negroes, that is no longer possible. As late as 1927, however, there was a "Chicago Old Settlers' Society" (organized in 1902) which had a membership of several hundred, composed of four classes: descendants of old settlers, old settlers proper, those of thirty-five years' continued residence in Chicago, and pioneers of fifty years' noncontinuous residence. An interview with the president of this society in 1927 revealed the separation between Northern and Southern Negroes in one large Northern city:

The whites began to move in and built up the present section of houses within the next twenty years after 1878. Very few houses have been constructed in this area for the last twenty years. These houses were first owned by Germans, then came the Jews toward the lake and the Irish near State [Street]. The

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Negro invasion began about 1915. Until that time we had been accepted as equals but as soon as the Southern Negroes began coming in we were relegated to their class. Our white friends shunned us and we were really without social life until our own group was better organized. But now most of the old folks have moved south to Washington Park or to Morgan Park. I would move also if it were not for my home here. We really do not mingle with the Southern Negro and they do not come near us as they know that we are Northerners.<sup>1</sup>

A third factor associated with class that is found among Negroes but not among whites is color differentials. The nearest comparison in the white world is difference in nationality backgrounds, but color distinction among Negroes is more significant because the desirable lightness is associated with the oppressor. As a matter of fact it is not light color alone that is desirable among Negroes but all the distinctive traits of the white man — straight or wavy hair, thin lips, narrow nose, and so on. Skin color is usually considered to be the most important of these, perhaps because it is most conspicuous and because lip and nose formation is highly correlated with it, while hair texture is partly controllable. Skin color became associated with class under slavery when white masters gave positions as house servants to “nice-looking” Negroes or granted special privileges to their own mulatto children (including setting them free, sending them North, or providing them with a college education). The former pattern was kept up after the Civil War; even today light-colored Negroes have better chances of getting many kinds of jobs. Thus white people have created the connection between class and color among Negroes.

In one respect color became crucial for Negroes and their group identification. This was in the matter of “passing” from the Negro group into the white. Until a generation ago,

<sup>1</sup> Interview, February 1927, by Vivien Palmer, recorded as Document 15 in “The History of Douglas,” an unpublished manuscript in the files of the Social Science Research Committee, University of Chicago.

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interracial sex relations were common in the South between white men and Negro women.<sup>2</sup> This not only created the color distinctions in the Negro group, but it also permitted a significant number of those who were defined as Negroes to pass as whites. When Negro group identification was low, as we have seen it was until about 1910 except for the brief Reconstruction period, Negroes did pass in considerable numbers. The proportion of those who pass to all those who are able to pass is actually one index of group identification, since the person who passes probably has a minimum amount of positive identification with the group he is passing out of. When group identification is low, those who cannot pass are envious of those who can; but the pressures they use against the passers are those of the envious and spiteful and are seldom effective in deterring passing.

As group identification rose among Negroes after 1910, there was less desire to pass on the part of those who could. They took a certain pride in being able to pass but not actually doing so. At the same time, group pressure increased against those who did pass. While a certain amount of envy also remained, the predominant attitude toward passers became one of disdain or disgust. At best the passer was looked upon as a prodigal. An example of the new type of group pressure is the famous but fictitious *Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, published anonymously in 1912 but actually written by one of the outstanding Negro leaders, James Weldon Johnson. This is a story, written as an autobiography, of a passing Negro who found life so unpleasant in the white world, and who so desired to identify himself as a protesting Negro, that he was happy to become a Negro again.

Negroes have seldom used exposure as a means of bringing pressure on the passer, since that would be aiding the white man. It is not always possible, of course, to expose a

<sup>2</sup> The facts on the amount of interracial sex relations and of passing are summarized in Myrdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-30.

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passing Negro, since he almost invariably changes his place of residence when he passes and is not likely to be known in the new location. Passing may be either temporary or permanent, and there are different kinds of group pressures used against each. While it is permanent passing that is an index of low group morale, temporary passing is a more divisive influence within the Negro world. Negroes usually know about the temporary passing of one of their group, and since only a small proportion of Negroes can pass, the knowledge causes feelings of jealousy and distance on the part of those who cannot. Also, those who do pass often feel a sense of superiority toward the rest of the group, along with their other attitudes toward passing.

Color itself has a divisive influence on the Negro community, both because of the valuation placed on it and because a person cannot acquire the desirable features no matter how hard he tries. It is, of course, common to try to straighten the hair and bleach the skin, but there are limits to the possibilities. Negro clubs and cliques are often selective of membership on the basis of color.<sup>3</sup> Negro teachers and employers favor pupils and employees with light skin,<sup>4</sup> and even children as young as eight or nine show a preference for light color.<sup>5</sup> The following excerpt from the case history of a moderately light brown girl, seventeen years old, who lives near Nashville, Tennessee, illustrates how color consciousness reduces group identification even among the youth:

<sup>3</sup> Two studies that reveal the ramifications of color differentiation in the Negro community are: W. L. Warner, B. Junker, and W. A. Adams, *Color and Human Nature* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1941); and Charles S. Johnson, *Growing Up in the Black Belt* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1941). An article which summarizes briefly the literature on Negro preference for light color is: Henry J. Myers and Leon Yochelson, "Color Denial in the Negro," *Psychiatry*, 11 (February 1948), 39-46. These authors also show a relationship between the desire for light color, group self-hatred, and individual psychosis.

<sup>4</sup> Charles H. Parrish, "Color Names and Color Notions," *Journal of Negro Education*, 15 (1946), 13ff.

<sup>5</sup> Melvin Seeman, "Skin Color Values in Three All-Negro School Classes," *American Sociological Review*, 11 (1946), 315ff.

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I like to talk with the white people in my neighborhood as they are very friendly. I have eaten at their homes and they have meals at my home. Many parents come to visit my entire family. The lady who owns the grocery store comes every Saturday and sits a while. Dr. Hertz, a white physician, used to be our family doctor. He very often brought his wife to visit us. I must admit that the white people in the community don't treat all Negroes in this friendly manner. They only associate with my family, my aunt, and another family — the Grays.

My contact with the colored community is confined to two families other than my relatives. I can get along with the Grays fine because they are light. It just seems that black people are evil — they just don't like to see you have anything. I have one friend who is dark. She lives in a part of my aunt's house. She is so sweet and friendly that you just can't help but like her even though she is dark. I guess I do select my friends on the basis of color, as all my friends are either light or brownskin. I just can't get along with dark people.

My parents don't permit us to discuss color. If they talk about it at all we never hear them. They say that it is ugly to say things about a person's color. My father has to be nice to people of all colors, because in his business that is very necessary. They have friends all colors, too, but now that I think about it, I think most of their friends are light. I don't see how anybody could like a dark person; they are just so mean and ugly.

Yes, the best color to be is white. You have many more privileges and there is much more chance for advancement in life. If you're white you can get a position a heap quicker. That's why I prefer to go North as people there look on you more as equals. They don't call you Negroes every time you turn around. I'm not particularly proud that I'm a Negro, but I guess there's nothing that I can do about it.<sup>6</sup>

Color often becomes a serious problem even within the family if the husband and wife or the children are of different shades and are color conscious. A dark man who achieves

<sup>6</sup> Social Science Institute, Fisk University, "The Social World of the Negro Youth." Mimeographed. Nashville, Tenn.: 1946. Pp. 6-7.

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economic success or prestige is likely to herald his new position by marrying a lighter woman. This tends to put darker women at a disadvantage in the marriage market, and there is a cleavage already. Disparaging remarks are exchanged between light and dark persons about each other's appearance and the character traits supposed to be related to color. Darker Negroes have developed certain verbal defenses—they may claim that "yellow" skin is ugly, that light-skinned Negroes have so much white blood that they are untrustworthy, and so on. The light-skinned Negroes are simply supercilious or adopt many of the prejudiced remarks of the whites. The extent of the division is seen in the fact that much of Garvey's appeal to the masses of the Negroes was in terms of the superiority of blackness. He rejected "mulattoes," not realizing that most Negroes have at least a little white ancestry. Other nationalist movements of lesser importance make the same appeal, as do individuals running for office. While whites are more inclined to select a light Negro,<sup>7</sup> the Negro group itself, when the choice is up to it, is more inclined to select a dark man.

The growth of group identification and the opening of educational and economic opportunities to dark Negroes are lessening the divisive influence of the color differential. If the light-skinned Negro considers himself superior, or if the dark-skinned Negro envies the other, they are tacitly accepting the white man's prejudice. With the growth of the Negro protest and of race pride, they are coming to recognize this and to keep their evaluations of color more to themselves. Since whites do not always select Negroes on the basis of light color, and since Negroes are increasingly independent of whites for economic success, dark Negroes are rising into the upper income groups. At the same time, light Negroes are becoming relatively fewer in number—

<sup>7</sup> This is not always true, of course; some whites prefer to single out black Negroes for special consideration. But this is infrequent enough to have little influence on prestige.



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either because of passing or because a low reproduction rate is outbalancing miscegenation—so that dark Negroes have to take over some of the higher positions.

The breaking-down of the relationship between color and class is reducing a serious block to Negro group identification. The “mulatto societies” are breaking up, and one is increasingly likely to see dark Negroes in professional positions. Class provides a serious enough cleavage in any group, but when color, which is relatively unchangeable, is associated with class, class becomes all the more divisive. In recent years color itself, without regard to class, is becoming less significant as a basis of cleavage among Negroes, at least in certain circles. It has become more likely that a dark man or dark woman will be adjudged handsome or beautiful on the basis of other features than skin color. Of course, in many cases these other features—like narrow nose, thin lips, and wavy hair—are still regarded as typical of the white man. The trend must not be exaggerated—color and physical appearance are still important and provide a basis of division among Negroes.

Besides the ways we have considered in which class causes cleavages among Negroes, and besides the usual ways in which class always separates people, there is one other factor among Negroes. Because Negroes are a group oppressed by whites, their behavior as individuals determines in part the way in which the whole group is treated. One of the reasons frequently given by whites for discrimination against Negroes is that the latter are offensive and even dangerous in their behavior. Even if they are not the real reasons for prejudice, these stereotypes of the Negro serve as rationalizations for whites. Lower-class Negroes, partly because they have taken over the behavior pattern of lower-class Southern whites and partly because they have never been allowed in the South to rise too far above the standards of slavery, are considered to have abominable manners. In the

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North some of the poor, recent migrants have become fairly well to do, sometimes through shady occupations, and they flaunt their wealth in a way even more obnoxious to most whites. Upper- and middle-class Negroes are anxious to combat this stereotype, and they themselves act in accord with the white man's norms. In fact some of the middle class tend to lean over backward, manifesting austere behavior and puritanical standards in reaction to the lower-class Negro's conduct.

This difference in behavior patterns not only reflects a cleavage in the minds of the upper- and middle-class Negroes, but it also creates one in the minds of lower-class Negroes. The latter consider upper- and middle-class Negroes to be cold and snobbish, or "dicty," which are attitudes of social distance. Although it was an upper-class, light-skinned Negro who wrote the following statement, it indicates the resentment the Negro masses have for class snobishness:

The upper class that has developed in the Race in the last twenty-five years has been a class whose aims are to exploit and drain the masses for all they are worth, then draw apart from them physically and socially and in many cases to build up a light skinned world of its own and ape the white man. . . . This class is of no importance . . . they are of no value to our masses, and the best interests of the Race demand that they refashion or be cast off.<sup>8</sup>

The common Negro pastime of "panning" the leaders has some of this quality of class resentment and reduces the effectiveness of the group as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

Further widening this particular cleavage, upper-class Negroes try to reform the manners of lower-class Negroes.

<sup>8</sup> From an article by Allison Davis (then an instructor at Hampton Institute) in the *Twin City Herald*, January 5, 1929. Quoted by: T. G. Standing, "Nationalism in Negro Leadership," *American Journal of Sociology*, XL (September 1934), 186.

<sup>9</sup> Drake and Cayton, *op. cit.*, pp. 720-27.

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There is a "Campaign for Better Conduct" to persuade Negroes to converse in quiet tones in public places, avoid flashy clothes, and so on. Special attention is given to behavior in theaters, ball parks, and public conveyances. There is an issue between those who are behind this campaign and those who say that the Negro must be given better opportunities before he can be expected to improve his manners. But, according to one advocate of the campaign, lower-class Negroes are being impressed by it and are changing their public manners.<sup>10</sup> Whether they are or not, it is likely that the campaign is causing a certain amount of resentment on the part of those who are expected to change.

Another matter, closely related to the campaign for better conduct but far more extensive in its implications, is the "talented tenth" theory. A number of educated Negroes, led by Du Bois, have stated that the Negro masses do not have the education, the sophistication, or the skills to improve their position by themselves, but must be led by the approximate 10 per cent who have advanced education or special skills. They even hold that education must be directed mainly to benefit this talented tenth rather than to give priority to mass education. We shall consider this theory again in another context; suffice it here to say that it has had some divisive effect among Negroes.

Although the factors we have considered in relation to class have been divisive factors, tending to block group identification, in some ways class itself is much less of a divisive influence among Negroes than among whites. In the first place, because of their common lot in the caste system, Negroes cannot feel too far apart no matter what their differences in wealth and education. Upper-class Negroes, as we have just seen, take a paternal interest in lower-class Negroes, and lower-class Negroes take pride in the achievement or wealth of upper-class Negroes. Secondly, upper- and mid-

<sup>10</sup> Joseph D. Bibb, "Crowd's Conduct," column in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 2, 1947, p. 7.

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dle-class Negroes seldom hire many employees, since their occupations tend to be professional rather than managerial. Thus there is little of the opposition between capital and labor that accompanies class differences among whites. Not long ago a very large proportion of upper-class Negroes were vociferous in condemning the "capitalists." In a sense, the "upper classes" for Negroes are the white upper classes, not their own. In this situation class itself cannot create too great a cleavage. But it should be remembered that the many special factors that accompany class in the Negro world create special rifts of their own.

### **"THE ADVANTAGES OF THE DISADVANTAGES"**

The Negro protest in America is against segregation and discrimination; yet a sizable proportion of the Negro upper and middle classes secure their positions because of these very things. Because all schools are segregated in the South, Negroes get positions as teachers and principals. (In the Negro public schools, all teachers and most principals are required by law to be Negro, but in private Negro colleges there are many white teachers.) Because Negroes cannot get adequate service from white doctors, they sometimes patronize Negro doctors. Because the white man falsely stereotypes the Negro as being unusually rhythmic, a significant proportion of the dance bands in the country are composed of Negroes. Because many white organizations feel a need to have one or two Negroes on their staffs in order to "prove" they are not prejudiced, sometimes unqualified Negroes get high incomes. Because there is a Negro problem, the Negro press and the Negro protest organizations are able to exist and to provide positions of prestige and high income to a significant number of Negroes.

These circumstances are called the "advantages of the disadvantages."<sup>11</sup> Even while he is fighting against segregation

<sup>11</sup> This term was first popularized by H. B. Frissell, the second principal of Hampton Institute.

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and discrimination, many an upper-class Negro knows that success in that battle would wipe out his personal position.<sup>12</sup> Most Negroes do not let this interfere with their protest, but a few instances are known in which Negroes have opposed the breakdown of segregation because it would put them out of their jobs, or have advocated the setting-up of segregated facilities to give them more opportunities. Any such instances are significant divisive forces in the Negro group, since they are akin to treason for a fighting nation. Sometimes there are false charges of such treason on the part of highly placed leaders, and this hurts the morale of the group as well as the effectiveness of the leader. These charges usually claim that such and such a leader has "sold out" the Negro group in return for some personal economic advantage, which might even take the form of cash. The fact that something like this actually does occur once in a while, especially on the part of certain Negro newspaper owners, seems to give support to the false charges, and Negro group morale is hurt.

E. Franklin Frazier, one of the leading sociologists in the United States, gives some examples of how a number of Negroes in the higher occupations sought to retain segregation in order to maintain their economic position and to avoid competition with whites:

It was suggested in a midwestern city that as a means of breaking down segregation in churches, a white church might take on an assistant Negro minister. The suggestion was immediately opposed by the Negro ministers in the city. Seemingly, they feared

<sup>12</sup> Roi Ottley, a Negro writer, says of these upper-class Negroes whose economic position is based on segregation: "Many of them look with alarm upon a world where they must compete with whites and thus lose their unique status. 'They prefer,' one Negro observer remarked, 'the overevaluation of their achievements and position behind the walls of segregation to a democratic order that would result in economic and social devaluation for themselves.' Nevertheless, they provide the vanguard of the race's economic and cultural progress, and constitute a leavening group in the Negro population." (Ottley, *New World A-Coming*, p. 177.)

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that if the plan were carried out members of the segregated Negro churches would be drawn away, into the white church.

The writer heard a Negro college president excuse the inefficiency of his administration on the grounds that the Negro was a "child race" and only seventy years out of slavery. In thus flattering his white listeners, he was fortifying his own position in the segregated Negro world.

In one Northern city, Negro doctors, instead of fighting the exclusion of Negro patients from municipal hospitals, have opened their own hospitals to which only Negroes are admitted, with the city paying a daily stipend for each patient.

During the war, there was a growing disposition on the part of white papers to handle news about Negroes just as they handled similar items concerning white people. On one occasion when white papers were about to carry a story of a distinguished achievement of Negroes in the military forces, they were requested to withhold the story until Negro newspapers had carried it.<sup>13</sup>

Once in a great while this type of thinking occurs in discussions of the race problem in general. Professor Gordon B. Hancock provides us with an interesting statement of the new problems that would be raised if the Negro problem were to be solved:

The color question is a social problem and, as such, is not essentially different from any other social problem; and by reason of this fact, it responds to the same processes of adjustment or maladjustment. Social problems by their very nature do not lend themselves to instantaneous and absolute solutions. To solve instantaneously and absolutely any social problem would conceivably make a hundred other problems quite as vexing as the one solved. Let us take the problem of poor health. Its complete and instantaneous solution would upset the entire balance of our social and economic life. What would become of all our fine physicians

<sup>13</sup> "Human, All Too Human," *Survey Graphic*, XXXVI (January 1947), 74-75, 99-100.

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and surgeons and nurses and hospitals and their attendants and equipment? What would happen to all of our drug stores and drug manufacturers and their investments? Our famous health resorts and sanatoria and their workers would be distressed, to say nothing of the inevitable undertaker. The manufacture of alcoholic beverages would in all probability cease as would the production of tea and coffee and soft drinks, since all of these things are regarded as unnecessary to health, but serve rather the satisfaction of unhealthful appetites. This casual observation of the imaginary solution of the problem of poor health offers fertile suggestions as to what might conceivably result from a total and instantaneous solution of any one of our many social problems including the race problem.<sup>14</sup>

The problem of a small group of upper-class Negroes gaining advantages from the disadvantages of their caste is part of the more general problem of minority group leadership. In reference to Jews, Kurt Lewin spoke of the weaknesses of "leadership from the periphery"<sup>15</sup> — that is, leadership from those who are economically successful and who thus do not feel the full brunt of being a member of a minority group. The upper classes of a minority group can protect themselves to a certain extent from discrimination and prejudice. For example, they can afford good housing and thus avoid the slum locations and overcrowding that housing segregation causes; they can afford automobiles and thus avoid Jim Crow trains, streetcars, and buses; they can afford expensive lawyers and bribes and thus are sometimes able to escape unfair treatment by the police and courts; they have a good income so that discrimination in employment scarcely affects them; their occupations usually do not force them to come in daily contact with members of the majority group,

<sup>14</sup> Gordon B. Hancock, "Race Relations in the United States: A Summary," in Rayford W. Logan (ed.), *What the Negro Wants* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), pp. 218-19.

<sup>15</sup> "Self-Hatred Among Jews," *Contemporary Jewish Record*, 4 (June 1941), 219-32. Reprinted in Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper, 1948), pp. 186-200.

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so they are not constantly exposed to manifestations of prejudice; their material comforts, prestige, and self-confidence born of success compensate for the frustrations arising out of their minority group status.

All these conditions are true for Negroes; most of them are true for other minority groups as well. Such facts put the upper-income members on the periphery of the minority group, since these upper-class persons do not have the same experiences as the other group members. They are not likely to feel their subordinate status so keenly and may not fight the minority group disabilities so uncompromisingly. Although their economic position, education, and skills tend to make leaders out of those with high incomes, they may not be the most effective leaders from the standpoint of group identification. "You can't trust them when they become rich and educated" is a common complaint of lower-class Negroes against their leaders.

Poverty is almost a tradition among Negroes. They sometimes assume that they do not have enough money to do certain things even when they actually have, by the average white man's standards. In a sense they are right, however, because even when they have a fairly adequate income, their minority position does not insure them security and tenure, and they must therefore save more than the average white man with the same income. A more important aspect of the Negroes' sense of poverty is the fact that they are used to getting charity from whites for what might be considered to be their group activities. Well-to-do Negroes, while they contribute generously of their time and effort, seldom contribute their money to Negro protest organizations or to the relief of impoverished Negroes. There is no tradition of philanthropy on their part as there is on the part of Jews, Japanese, immigrants from Europe, and other minority groups in America. Most of the financial support for the Negro protest, Negro private education, and Negro improvement or-



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ganizations comes from whites. There is no private charity organized by Negroes for Negroes. The United Negro College Fund gets only a small proportion of its funds from Negroes.<sup>16</sup> In one small Northern city with a Negro population of about six hundred, 85 per cent of the funds for the one Negro church came from whites—until a new, group-conscious minister put pressure on his community and reduced the white charity to 20 per cent.

Negro publicists often chide their readers about this lack of group support. P. L. Prattis, the executive editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, says, for example:

Most of the Negroes are poor, but there are some rich Negroes and many of moderate means. Comparisons are certainly odious, but they also have salutary significance. It is difficult not to compare the Jew and the Negro, particularly in the realm of self help. The plain, simple fact is that Jews take care of themselves and look out for one another much better than Negroes. . . . If this writer should inquire, in great anguish, why Negroes do not give more for their own cause than they do, somebody would probably present the figures to show how poor the Negro is. I don't believe the Negro is as poor as his record of giving makes out. I don't believe that he has suffered enough and learned enough to feel the compulsion to give. Most Negroes with means are trying to cushion themselves and let the devil take the hindmost. Why should Negroes have to beg whites for money for the education of Negroes? . . . Negroes ought to take over the United Negro College Fund as a matter of race pride. They ought to seize upon it as a symbol of their own willingness and capacity to take care of their needs. They have the money. What they lack is the will and the discipline.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, the *Carolina Times* comments editorially: "Here

<sup>16</sup> Negroes gave \$130,000 to the UNCF in 1947 out of a total goal of \$1,300,000. In addition, Negroes gave \$600,000 during the fiscal year 1946-47 to individual colleges of their choice. The total of \$730,000 is trivial compared with the \$170,000,000 sought for the United Jewish Appeal in 1947. (Figures from UNCF as quoted in the *New York Times*, July 13, 1947, p. 44.)

<sup>17</sup> P. L. Prattis, "The Horizon," *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 17, 1947, p. 7.

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in Durham Negroes can find money for new automobiles, fine homes, extended vacations and other luxuries, but they fail miserably when it comes to finding a few dollars for the defense of their rights as American citizens beyond begging for them.”<sup>18</sup> There is a certain amount of protest involved in this lack of charity — “If the whites want segregation, let them pay for it.” But mainly it reflects a self-centered attitude, and is so interpreted by most Negro leaders.

The question of breaking down residential segregation is another one toward which Negroes have divided interests. In keeping with their demands to be accepted fully and equally as Americans, they protest against residential segregation in any form. Negroes have both economic and health motives to get out of the overcrowded, high-rent ghettos. When the opportunity arises to disperse the Negro population of a city, however, opposition tends to develop. In the first place, the concentration of Negro voters in an all-Negro district gives Negro politicians a chance to get elected to office. Even for the constituency, a man who represents Negroes primarily is a “better” representative than one who has only a small proportion of Negroes in his district. Secondly, Negro businessmen have a better market where there is a high concentration of Negro consumers. The Negro real estate operator has been in an especially favored position to take advantage of the people who have had to live in a restricted area. If the May 1948 decision of the Supreme Court really opens up white areas for Negro occupancy, Negro realtors and other Negro businessmen are likely to be faced with serious competition from their white counterparts.

### PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION

There has always been a large amount of personal and social disorganization among American Negroes. Under slavery, even a Negro’s family life and personal disposal were subject to the whim of his master. Since Emancipation came

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 31, 1947, p. 6.

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without an organized effort at economic rehabilitation, it too was disorganizing in its effect. The constant terror in the South, and the poverty and caste situation in both North and South, have kept up the high level of disorganization. Urbanization has been a disorganizing factor in the lives of all who have experienced it, and an unusually large number of Negroes have been urbanized since 1915.

Among Negroes disorganization is manifested in a high susceptibility to quacks and demagogues, a high rate of family breakup and illegitimacy, a high turnover in jobs, a high crime and juvenile delinquency rate (especially for trivial offenses), a good deal of venereal disease, a large amount of petty friction between neighborhood organizations, an unusual amount of uncontrollable emotion, and a cynicism about self-ameliorative efforts outside of the organized Negro protest. However, Negroes do not have a high rate of suicide or functional psychosis, both of which seem to be due to personal isolation more than to other factors causing disorganization.<sup>19</sup> There is little personal isolation among Negroes; there is, rather, overstimulation and a lack of economic and legal conditions that make for security.

Negro culture in America is generally adapted to promoting individual happiness. There is little of the puritanism and personal aloofness that characterizes white American culture. Still, Negroes do not give the impression of being a happy people, except for short periods when they can temporarily forget about their problems — at a party, for example, or when engaged in neighborly visiting. Negroes have too many problems to be happy. They are always seeking something; they use too many nostrums, join too many organizations, fall under the spell of too many movements. They are thus among the extreme victims of modern mass society.

"Fear" and "frustration" are the key terms in understand-

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, R. E. L. Faris and H. W. Dunham, *Mental Disorders in Urban Areas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939). Also Myrdal, *op. cit.*, Chapter 44.

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ing the disorganization of Negroes and its detrimental effects on their group identification. Fear inhibits their actions; frustration makes their actions seem futile. Both consume much of the physical and nervous energy that "normal" people use in solving their problems and in conducting their everyday activities. Negroes are among the few elements in our society that are still subject to physical violence and other means of terror (in the South). Their fears from this source are added to the fear resulting from economic insecurity, with which an unusually large proportion of Negroes are afflicted. Because of the discriminations against them, in both North and South, many of their daily efforts and ambitions are doomed to failure. The physical and psychic wall of segregation that surrounds them prevents their appeals to the white man from being heard. Their many discontents are met with an unusually large proportion of failures to solve them. Negro experiences thus assume the character of an undifferentiated mass of frustration.

All this affects Negro group identification. The disorganization just described deflects the individual Negro's interest from the group to himself. It creates a desire for individual escape rather than for organization with one's fellows in similar difficulties to combat the common problem. Political observers know that the people farthest down on the economic or political scale—the *Lumpenproletariat*—are the ones least capable of engaging in concerted action to improve their lot. Negroes have long been in that category.

As economic conditions for Negroes improve—and they have improved since the beginning of World War II—and as they increase their voting power—it has risen steadily since 1915—they are likely to come out of this condition of extreme disorganization. For the time being, however, disorganization must be counted as a major block to group identification.

Although they are not afflicted with the disorganization

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of lower-class Negroes, some Negro intellectuals, who are predominantly of the upper class, tend to have an attitude of cynicism and defeatism that negatively affects their group identification. The attitude is variously expressed: "You can't do anything with Negroes." "You can't do anything about stamping out prejudice unless you change white people's basic personality." "There is no way out except a revolution." "It's foolish even to try to do anything." They thus prevent themselves from taking any effective action. They still express the Negro protest, but always in an individualized, uncoordinated way. This is unfortunate from the standpoint of the Negro masses since these intellectuals often have the skills, the ability to talk to whites, the knowledge, and the training to think that would make them the most fitting leaders of the concerted Negro protest. Fortunately not all Negro intellectuals belong to this category; many of them justify Du Bois' expectations for the talented tenth.

### ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Originally, Negroes from Africa were of about as many different races and nationalities as were whites from Europe, although most of them were West Coast Negroes.<sup>20</sup> They were so completely mixed up under slavery, however, and their traditions so completely lost, that it is safe to say that no American Negro today pays any attention to what race or nationality he came from in Africa. Further, there has been a good deal of intermixture with whites and Indians, and this ancestry is not distinguished by race, tribe, or nationality. The best estimate indicates that 72 per cent of a presumably representative sample of American Negroes in 1929 had knowledge of some white ancestry and 27 per cent knew of some Indian ancestry.<sup>21</sup> We have already seen, in

<sup>20</sup> The facts for this paragraph are taken from Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, pp. 43-53; and Melville J. Herskovits, "On the Provenience of the New World Negroes," *Social Forces*, 12 (December 1933), 247-62.

<sup>21</sup> Melville J. Herskovits, *The Anthropometry of the American Negro* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930).

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considering skin color, what effect a differential in amount of white ancestry has. Indian ancestry has less effect, but those Negroes who know of some Indian forebears are proud of the fact.

There is one other ethnic difference among Negroes that has significance today. That is the difference between native American Negroes and Negroes who have immigrated from other countries, principally the West Indies. In 1940 there were 84,000 foreign-born Negroes in the United States, of whom three-fourths were from the West Indies and about a thousand from Africa. The West Indian group, including the children born in this country, is separated from native-born Negroes to a considerable extent. One reason for this separation is that 58 per cent of all foreign-born Negroes in 1940 resided in New York City, and even there they tended to concentrate in certain sections. Secondly, many of them speak the language of their homeland — French, Spanish, or Portuguese — and even those who speak English often have a unique accent. Thirdly, like all immigrants, they have problems of cultural adjustment.

An even more significant fact is that West Indian Negroes are not used to living under caste, although they frequently have experienced economic deprivation. Having avoided caste and terror for generations, their morale is high and they react spontaneously and positively against caste in the United States. "Because of his resentment for the segregation pattern of the United States the foreign-born Negro is a relentless protagonist for all causes fighting the social, political and economic disabilities of the Negroes in this country."<sup>22</sup> Not having the traditions of inefficiency found in the Southern section of this country, the reaction of West Indian Negroes to caste — as to most other things — is energetic. It is not surprising that a disproportionate number of them become leaders in the Negro protest or members of a protest movement. On the whole, they promote Negro group identi-

<sup>22</sup> Reid, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12.

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fication rather than block it. "The immigrants' fight has been one to enhance self-respect, and certainly to offer a means of escape. In the States the programs they originate are seldom those of universal radicalism, but of racial radicalism to stimulate group pride and group solidarity, a compensatory process to offset the partial adjustment he now accepts."<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, there is rivalry between native American Negroes and the West Indians, and sometimes the rivalry is bitter. American-born Negroes accuse the West Indians of being willing to work for substandard wages and unwilling to acquire the ballot.<sup>24</sup> Reid, who has made the most thorough study of the immigrant Negro in the United States, found the following stereotypes about the West Indian Negro in the minds of native American Negroes:

1. He is very "smart"—(intelligent), and better educated than the native American.
2. He is craftier than the Jews, and is not to be trusted in financial matters.
3. He is over-sensitive and quick to defend his "dignity."
4. He is hot-tempered.
5. He is so British or so French that he does not have time to be himself.
6. He feels that he is superior to the native-born Negro, and is overbearing in demonstrating it.
7. He is either too proud or too lazy to work.
8. He is clannish.
9. "All of them [the 'foreigners'] are just alike."
10. He beats his wife, and treats women as if they were chattel.
11. He is always looking out for himself first.
12. He is a "trouble-maker" with white people.
13. He is always seeking to make an impression on someone.
14. He lacks race-pride.
15. He is too race-conscious.
16. He talks incessantly.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>24</sup> Only about one-fourth of the immigrant British West Indians had become American citizens in 1930. (Ottley, *New World A-Coming*, p. 45.)

<sup>25</sup> Reid, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-8.

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The cleavage between foreign-born and native-born is not too significant for the group identification of the Negro population as a whole, however, because there are few foreign-born, most of them live in New York City, and most of them assimilate in a generation or less. What rivalry there is tends to affect Negroes in New York City alone.<sup>28</sup>

### IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Especially since the time of the Washington-Du Bois controversy, Negroes have been somewhat divided in their ideas as to what they should do about different aspects of the Negro problem. The major division today is between those who would be aggressive in the Negro protest and those who would compromise. The former call the latter "Uncle Toms" and "handkerchief heads," while the latter term the former "radicals" and "hotheads." It is a serious charge in the Negro community today to call a person an "Uncle Tom," and it is an implicit criticism even to call anyone a follower of Booker T. Washington (even though most Negroes admit that there was much wisdom in what Washington accomplished "at that time").

This very attitude prevents compromise, which is usually a necessity in the practical political affairs of every day, from having any major detrimental effects on group morale or group identification. It is safe to say that no Negro leader of any significance today regards compromise as a principle; it is always regarded as an expediency. But there are those who would never compromise, even surreptitiously, and they are in sharp disagreement with those who do. For example, when the state legislature of Missouri voted to grant the segregated Lincoln University Law School \$400,000 for a seriously needed new building, the organized Negro leadership of St. Louis petitioned the governor to veto the appropriation on the ground that it would solidify segregation.

<sup>28</sup> For a description of West Indians in New York City, see Ottley, *'New World A-Coming,'* pp. 40-58.



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One of the local Negro leaders, however, argued the need for training Negro lawyers, pointed out that Missouri was not likely to abolish segregation in education for a long time, and pleaded for more money for the law school. Nevertheless, the NAACP went on record as strongly opposing the measure.

The quarrel between the compromisers and the aggressive ones becomes bitter on all sorts of specific issues. The compromisers would be glad to accept a segregated Negro regional university in the South if it was a good one; the noncompromisers want Negro law students to attend the regular state universities. The compromisers would be willing to have an all-Negro hospital in the North to care for the extra load of impoverished Negro patients; the noncompromisers believe it sets a dangerous precedent to allow this sort of segregation in the North and recommend that one or more nonsegregated institutions be built to handle the load. Thus the conflict runs, dividing Negro leadership primarily but also splitting the rank and file.

There are limits beyond which the compromisers may not go — on pain of group ostracism. One example comes from Oklahoma, when the NAACP was battling exclusion of Negroes from the state university in 1948. The state of Oklahoma tried to get around the Supreme Court's verdict in the Sipuel case by setting up a "separate but equal" law school for Negroes. Only one student — Theophilus M. Roberts, a waiter at the Oklahoma Club — enrolled; other Negroes boycotted the school and continued the court fight. Mr. Roberts also shortly quit the school, saying — according to *Time* magazine — "I've bucked the Church, the fraternal organizations and the man in the street. The pressure on me was more than I could take."<sup>27</sup>

An even more significant example of group pressure occurred when George S. Schuyler, a leading columnist and

<sup>27</sup> *Time*, LI (June 28, 1948), 79.

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editor for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, ran a series of articles under the general title, "What's Good About the South." In a column accompanying one of these articles Schuyler made the following remarks, among others:

After a recent turn through fourteen States of the South it strikes me that, as elsewhere, the biggest handicap Negroes are encountering is themselves. Most of what is said and written about the South is untrue. Today it is not a place of terror and persecution, nor has it been for many decades. . . . For all the faults of the South, it must be admitted that colored people are better off there than any other minority elsewhere with comparable background. . . . Nowhere is there studied insult or discourtesy within the social framework of the section, and everywhere Negroes tell me that persecution and police brutality are rarely encountered. . . .<sup>28</sup>

A few days later, on the radio presentation of "America's Town Meeting of the Air," Hodding Carter—a liberal white Southerner and editor-publisher of the *Democrat Delta-Times* of Greenville, Mississippi—quoted these remarks of Schuyler's to defend the South and its system of segregation. Carter was opposed by Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, and by Raymond Sprigle, white reporter of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

The reaction of the Negro public against Schuyler was apparently very strong, for the following developments appeared in the next issues of the *Pittsburgh Courier*: (1) There was a front-page headline story under the titles, "Nation All Ears as Geo. Schuyler is Quoted on Air," and "What Did Schuyler Really Say?" (2) An editorial and an article were printed dissociating the *Courier* from Schuyler's opinions, although at the same time the *Courier* tried to defend Schuyler. (3) Schuyler's regular column was omitted from one issue of the *Courier*. (4) The headings of the articles in the series on "What's Good About the South" were shifted from

<sup>28</sup> George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," *Pittsburgh Courier*, November 6, 1946, p. 17.

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pro-Southern wording to anti-Southern wording. (5) Reactions to Schuyler in the form of letters from readers continued to be reported in the *Courier* for over a month.

Probably the majority of the writers for the large Northern Negro newspapers belong to the aggressive school. They regularly stir up their readers and flay their opponents. The following excerpt from a regular column by Joseph D. Bibb in the *Pittsburgh Courier* states the theme by comparing the Negro situation with that of the Jews:

Writing of the Jewish terrorists of Palestine, and dramatizing these letters by reproducing his blistering, burning expressions in full page advertisements in American newspapers, Ben Hecht, famous newspaperman and Hollywood scenario writer, fixes human ambition and gives a ringing challenge to the cringing, crouching, pussy-footing colored Americans. . . . Never to our knowledge have timid appeasers of colored blood been so pillioned and castigated by any of their own blood as Hecht assails and lambasts his Jewish brothers. Should the "respectable leadership" among colored Americans take note of the plight of their own fold in the hell holes of Dixie, perhaps the respect and admiration of civilization might be aroused.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, some of the Southern newspaper writers are advocates of the compromise position. An illustration of this — with an indication of how easily the compromise position slips over into an attack on a large section of the Negro population — is found in the following excerpt from a newspaper column by Dean Gordon B. Hancock in the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*:

Georgia must be limited in its anti-Negro propensities to allow Atlanta to become the Negro Athens of the world. People cannot be so bad to allow a thing like that to happen. Negro business has reached in Atlanta and Georgia proportions that show that even in Georgia great things are possible for those who have a will to find the way. And it must not be slightly consid-

<sup>20</sup> Joseph D. Bibb, "Geese Babbler," *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 16, 1947, p. 7.

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ered that the Negroes who stuck it out in Georgia are in many ways superior to those who ran away from Georgia.<sup>80</sup>

Influenced by Communism, some of the noncompromisers believe that revolution, or drastic change in the economic system, is the only solution for the Negro problem. This is paradoxical, since the Communist party in the United States looks forward to the creation of a completely segregated Negro state as the solution to the Negro problem,<sup>81</sup> while those Negroes influenced by Communism are against segregation in any form. The bases of their attraction to Communism are the idea of economic revolution — since very few Negroes, even of the upper class, are capitalists — and the white Communists' refusal to countenance social discrimination in their personal contacts. However, the overwhelming majority of Negro Americans, like the overwhelming majority of white Americans, are against Communism, and some of the Negro leaders abominate it. But because Communism is such an issue in America, and because some Negroes regard it as a solution to the Negro problem, it creates a cleavage of greater significance among Negroes than among whites.

For example, a group of seventy-six Negro leaders, many of whom were not Communists, recently submitted a petition to President Truman and Congress protesting against "the fascist-like proposal of Labor Secretary Lewis B. Schwellenbach to legalize the Communist party." Other Negroes denounced both the Communist and non-Communist Negroes who signed the petition. George S. Schuyler, one of the

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 3, 1948, p. 6. The *Courier* comments: "Is it necessary, Doctor, to disparage all those who left Georgia in order to applaud some of those who remained?"

<sup>81</sup> Various articles written by Communists in *Political Affairs*, XXV (January 1946), summarized in T. H. Kennedy and T. F. Leary, "Communist Thought on the Negro," *Phylon*, VIII (Second Quarter 1947), 116-23. The Communist party drifted away from the doctrine of a segregated forty-ninth state for Negroes during Browder's "Popular Front" period, but this "Browderism" is heresy now, and the Communist position is again in favor of the segregated setup.

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most prominent Negro newspapermen, said: "Every Negro who signed that petition is either an ignoramus or an enemy to his people."<sup>32</sup> Dr. Horace Mann Bond, president of Lincoln University, denounced Communism as the "snare and delusion of the masses everywhere" and said that Negroes who became Communists were "Uncle Toms of the left," willing to sacrifice the welfare of their people in order to follow a party line laid down five thousand miles away by a small group of worthless tyrants.<sup>33</sup>

In another instance, the *Pittsburgh Courier* commented editorially on the "Strange Case of Paul Robeson" because the famous Negro concert singer devoted his intermissions to making speeches in favor of Communism.<sup>34</sup> Roy Wilkins, editor of the *Crisis* and assistant secretary of the NAACP, remarked with meaning: "Personally, I would rather hear Robeson sing than hear him make a speech."<sup>35</sup> The *Courier* also ran a series of articles showing how the Communists took over the National Negro Congress and how they tried to take over the NAACP.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, *Phylon*, a serious Negro magazine published by Atlanta University, printed a series of articles explaining the Communist position. One of the articles was written by Benjamin J. Davis, an open Communist and member of the city council of New York City, who made most of his appeals to the American Creed: "Out of my personal experiences as a Negro American, and in quest of the liberty, freedom and equal rights proclaimed in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence, I, like thousands of other Negroes — and white citizens — joined the Communist party."<sup>37</sup> Another Negro columnist, Joseph D.

<sup>32</sup> "Views and Reviews," *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 24, 1947, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> As reported by the *New York Times*, May 11, 1947, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 3, 1947, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted, *ibid.*, May 17, 1947, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, the issue of May 3, 1947, p. 13: "Reds Tried to Grab Detroit NAACP Branch."

<sup>37</sup> Benjamin J. Davis, "Why I Am a Communist," *Phylon*, VIII (Second Quarter 1947), 105-16.

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Bibb, took George S. Schuyler to task for condemning the petitioners against the outlawing of the Communist party: "It took a lot of brazen nerve and unmitigated gall, and likewise some very unconsidered judgment, for friend Schuyler to brand such people as . . . 'lame brains.'" <sup>38</sup> Thus in 1947 Negro leaders and publicists felt the need to line up for or against Communism. The heat with which they express their opposition to each other indicates how significant this cleavage is among the more educated Negroes.

Another question of policy that divides Negroes concerns the nature of secondary and higher education, although this issue was more important in the past than it is today. Even before Booker T. Washington—although the position was later connected with his name—there was a group of Negroes who believed that training for Negroes should be vocational, especially in agriculture, domestic science, and the other fields in which Negroes had economic opportunities. Du Bois and his friends held that education for Negroes should be the same as for whites, and that a higher education in the liberal arts was necessary for training Negro leaders. The existence of higher educational institutions of both kinds—Hampton and Tuskegee of the vocational type and Fisk and Howard of the liberal-arts type—preserved the controversy, as did the white patrons of the different institutions. Since World War I the controversy has largely declined, and most Negroes recognize the need for colleges of both types. The colleges themselves have changed and now approach each other more closely in curriculum. However, some difference of opinion still exists to divide the upper strata of Negroes.

### NEGRO SELF-HATRED

A well-known phenomenon among members of minority groups is hatred of the group, its culture, its members, and even of oneself because one is a member of the group. Group

<sup>38</sup> "A Smear Resented," *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 24, 1947, p. 8.

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self-hatred may be thought of as the opposite of group identification. It manifests itself in all the expressions of prejudice that characterize the prejudiced members of the majority group. It also appears in a desire to escape all identification with the minority group—one passes, tries to pass, or becomes an emotional advocate of passing. A distinction should be made, however, between the person who advocates assimilation because of a rational belief that it is the best solution to the minority problem, and the person who advocates assimilation solely because he personally would like to escape being a member of the minority group. Among Jews the latter type of assimilationist has been characterized as a Jew who will associate only with those Jews who will not associate with other Jews. The Negro, because of his physical features, usually finds it more difficult to assimilate than does the Jew, and therefore his group self-hatred takes somewhat different forms.

We have already cited William H. Thomas as an example of Negro group self-hatred during a time when that feeling was common and when Negro group identification was very low. No Negro could express himself that strongly today without ostracizing himself completely from the group. There are some Negroes today, however, who believe Negroes guilty of things of which they are not in fact guilty, and who claim that Negroes are not culturally prepared for full equality of opportunity or treatment. When writing about politics, for example, Bertram W. Doyle, the Negro sociologist, says:

. . . the Negro masses are, in general, not interested. The situation serves as an illustration to draw the distinction between the controls established by laws and formal regulation and those fixed in custom and habit. The Negro masses look on the white man as chosen to rule and on the ballot as a means to that end. They feel out of place participating in such. They accept their status as nonvoters and expect to be guided thereby. They would much prefer that "quality" white people govern them; but, even

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in other instances, they exhibit a lack of interest. From this standpoint the battle for and against Negro suffrage, on principle, or on a platform of the enforcement of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments of the Constitution, is hampered by the underlying sentiments and habits of the Negroes themselves. Voting and participation in governmental affairs seem not to be in the mores of the Negro group.<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, Spencer Logan, a young Negro veteran, has recently written in regard to aggressive Negro leadership:

Negro leaders ruled by this thought pattern are in my opinion guilty, along with their white counterparts, of the gravest injustice to their case if they attempt to gain by force of law alone the advantages of social equality from people who are not spiritually or morally prepared to grant it. They should realize that those who live by political agitation are by this very fact often handicapped as leaders; for a man who fights for the legal recognition of a principle may in the process lose sight of the human values involved.<sup>40</sup>

The search for material advantage under the caste system sometimes leads to group self-hatred and to individual self-hatred, as is illustrated in the following incident. At the eighth convention of the American Federation of Radio Artists (predominantly white) a resolution was brought up to discourage the constant use of Negroes in stereotyped roles on radio programs. One of the Negro members opposed the resolution, and was reported as saying: "I am very proud

<sup>39</sup> Bertram W. Doyle, *The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), pp. 139-40. A bias in favor of the Negro's accommodating himself to a subordinate status appears throughout the book. The only studies of Negro voting in the North—studies made in Chicago and Detroit—show that Negroes vote about as much as whites do, especially when economic status is held constant. In the South, of course, Negroes have not voted to any great extent because of the pressures put on them. In the last few years, however, under favor of Supreme Court decisions outlawing the white primary, Negroes have been daring to vote in spite of the pressures, often at great risk to themselves. See pages 48-50 and 119-20 of this book.

<sup>40</sup> From Spencer Logan, *A Negro's Faith in America*, p. 19. Copyright 1946 by the Macmillan Co. Used by permission of the Macmillan Co., publishers.



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that I can portray a stereotyped role. When you take that away from me you take away my birthright.”<sup>41</sup> The *Amsterdam News* commented editorially, “It is plainly seen that too much assistance in the fight against stereotypes and other forms of discrimination cannot be expected from those who profit by them.”<sup>42</sup>

Self-hatred is seen in more informal contexts throughout the Negro world. Upper-class Negroes, especially when no whites are around, sometimes comment on the ugliness or bad traits of dark or lower-class Negroes. One light-skinned woman once expressed fear of another Negro “because he was so black.” Even lower-class Negroes frequently use the despised word “nigger” in describing some objectionable person (although they also use the term in a friendly way when among themselves). Such expressions as “What can you expect from Negroes”; “It [some bad trait] comes from his Negro blood”; “No wonder the race is treated as it is”; and “He had all the typical Negro traits [used with reference to bad traits]” are used by Negroes and are probably not uncommon. Yet if these expressions were used by a white man, they would immediately be recognized as examples of prejudice. The Negro stool pigeon who reports everything that goes on in the Negro community to his white boss, and who is found so frequently in the South, is another common example of group self-hatred.

Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, professor of psychology at Queens College, has found cases of Negro self-hatred in Negro children at the age of four years.<sup>43</sup> Clearly, the causes of group self-hatred exert a very strong influence, even if suppressed by most adult Negroes most of the time. One major cause of the feeling is what the Negro child actually sees — because

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 11, 1947, p. 19.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, November 1, 1947, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Statement made at the Race Relations Institute, Fisk University, July 3, 1947. For children's recognition of themselves as Negroes see a study of K. B. and M. K. Clark, “The Development of Consciousness of Self and the Emergence of Racial Identification in Negro Pre-school Children,” *Journal of Social Psychology*, 10 (1939), 591-99.

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of the direct and indirect influences of caste and the slave tradition, Negroes are actually in an inferior position to whites. The Negro child also experiences the ways in which prejudice is commonly expressed. He learns to be prejudiced in almost the same way the white child learns to be prejudiced, since he is also part of American culture. He unconsciously comes to feel that by rejecting Negroes and "Negro ways" he can escape being a Negro and all the handicaps that involves.

Another cause of Negro self-hatred arises out of the frustrations that the Negro constantly experiences in the caste system. When one is abused or insulted and forces oneself to react passively, the hatred that would normally be directed toward the abusing or insulting person is instead turned inward. One despises oneself for being "less than a man." "Group self-contempt" would be a better term for this feeling than group self-hatred.

Benjamin E. Mays, a leading Negro college president and newspaper columnist, considers this type of reaction to be a cause of the high murder rate found among Negroes:

The Negro is so circumscribed in Southern life that he often moves in fear from day to day. In his job he must be careful to say and do the things most acceptable to his white employers. As he elbows his way through crowded, congested streets he must be careful. As he trades, he must, as a rule, be more polite than others. If he gets angry and wants to give someone a tongue-lashing he dares not if a white person is the object of his wrath. So when he goes home or goes to a strictly Negro environment, he must let out his pent-up emotion. His wife or child may get it. If he drinks or gambles, his comrade may get it. He has been a coward all day in another environment, so he must now prove that he is a bully.

If the Negro were treated more humanly, if he were permitted to enjoy all the civil rights that others enjoy, if his economic life were better, and if he could move more relaxed in our society, his murder rate would decline rapidly.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> "Georgia Leads," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 28, 1947, p. 7.

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Richard Wright, the eminent novelist, puts the point succinctly: "I have seen many Negroes solve the problem of being black by transferring their hatred of themselves to others with a black skin and fighting them."<sup>45</sup>

Akin to group self-hatred is the tendency of many Negroes to be more envious of one another than of whites. This is a common phenomenon found even outside of minorities — one man will be envious of another only if he feels himself to be in competition. Since Negroes usually do not feel themselves to be in competition with whites, they are not envious when individual whites get ahead. But when a Negro achieves success, the envy of many of his fellows drags him down. Part of this is due to Negro self-hatred; whites are considered to be naturally so superior that they are beyond envy, but a successful Negro meets the question, "What's he got that I haven't got?" Benjamin E. Mays brings this point out clearly:

Negroes seem to be jealous of each other and do not want to see each other rise. . . . I have seldom, if ever, seen a Negro who was jealous of the successes of a white person. Negroes take it for granted that white people are to succeed. . . . But it too often happens that one Negro hates another if he thinks that Negro outstrips him in the pulpit, in surgery, in business, or in popularity and fame. I know this intra-racial jealousy can be explained in part on the basis of the fact that Negroes and whites move in two separate worlds and Negroes think mostly of their own little world.

But this is not all. I believe it is the inferiority complex among Negroes. Negroes have been taught to worship that which is white so long and to look with suspicion or disdain upon that which is not white, until they feel that it is not their business to compete with white men. They are usually ready to make concessions to those who are white, whereas they would never make such concessions to members of their own race.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Richard Wright, *Black Boy* (New York: Harper, 1937), p. 221. Copyright 1945 by Richard Wright.

<sup>46</sup> Benjamin E. Mays, "Peculiarities," *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 19, 1947, p. 7.

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A Negro actress who traveled with an otherwise white Northern company throughout the South reported that several Southern Negroes were viciously envious of her escape from Jim Crow and tried to force her back into the segregated patterns.

In Texas, a colored man told me I was on the wrong side of the station. "You belong over here with me. Why try to highhat somebody? I know you are colored." When I didn't move over to the Jim Crow side he protested to the station master. . . . Another one said, "I know you have got some nice white folks, but I think you are taking it too far when you eat with them. There's got to be a difference between us, you know."<sup>47</sup>

Some of the same sort of jealousy is expressed against Negroes whose position of leadership forces them to be somewhat aloof from the masses. The critics are especially caustic when the race leader is temperamentally unsociable, as in the case of Du Bois. The following statement expresses in writing what Negroes frequently say about Du Bois: "The Professor [Du Bois] knows less men and women of his race than any prominent person in America, by reason of his aloofness and exclusiveness. He elects to know no one and to serve his people at forty feet range."<sup>48</sup>

Studies among Negro college students by James A. Bayton reveal some of the ways in which group self-hatred undermines the self-confidence of the individual. First, Bayton found that the Negro students had the same racial stereotypes that white students have: "The Negro is superstitious, lazy, happy-go-lucky, very religious, ostentatious, loud and musical." At their own college, however, they characterized the Negro students as "intelligent, ambitious, imaginative, sophisticated and sportsmanlike."<sup>49</sup> The next step was to give a regular performance test to the Negro students and

<sup>47</sup> Interview reported in the *Afro-American*, July 10, 1943, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> Editorial in the *Atlanta Independent*, February 21, 1929. Quoted by T. G. Standing, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>49</sup> James A. Bayton, "The Racial Stereotype of Negro College Students," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 36 (1941), 97-102.

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tell them their scores. Each student was then asked to estimate: (1) the best score he could ever make (ultimate goal); (2) the score he expected to make on the next trial (immediate goal); and (3) the score below which he would never drop (confidence). Half the students were then told that their average performance was equal to that of white college men; the other half were told that their average performance was equal to that of other Negro college men. They were again asked to estimate the three types of scores, and differences were noted between the first and second estimates. It was found that the Negro students who had been told that their performance was equal to that of white men now estimated a lower score below which they would never drop (number 3). In other words, their self-confidence fell when they felt they were in competition with whites. They were less sure of themselves, although their immediate goals and ultimate goals did not drop.<sup>50</sup> .

Still another phenomenon that is psychologically related to Negro self-hatred, although it appears to be just the opposite, is the blatant, nationalistic claim to the cultural achievements of Negroes with whom there is no cultural contact. For American Negroes to be proud of the achievements of Alexander Dumas, who had some Negro ancestry but whose culture was entirely French, indicates an unconscious assumption on the part of Negroes that race is important for achievement (which they usually consciously, and correctly, deny), and a feeling that they are inferior and must hunt far afield for something to be proud of.

This phenomenon is not unimportant. The whole tendency of the Negro History movement—not as history but as propaganda—is to encourage the average Negro to escape the realities—the actual achievements and the actual failures—of the present. Although the movement consciously tends to build race pride, it may also cause Negroes uncon-

<sup>50</sup> James A. Bayton, "The Psychology of Racial Morale," *Journal of Negro Education*, XI (April 1942), 150-53.

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sciously to recognize that group pride is built partly on delusion, and therefore may result in a devaluation of themselves for being forced to resort to self-deception. It is as if the modern Greek people tried to build their national pride on the achievements of ancient Greece, knowing all the while that the ancient culture had been completely forgotten, that another ethnic group had occupied the land, and that other contemporary people completely dissociated them from the ancient culture. Or the Negro may resemble James Thurber's character, Walter Mitty—the weak man who dreams he is strong, brave, and popular and then wakes up. This is not healthy psychologically and tends to cause self-contempt. A distinction should be made, however, between race pride built on the contemporary achievements of Negroes in the caste system—such as those of Joe Louis, Paul Robeson, and W. E. B. Du Bois—and the race pride built on the cultural achievements of people who have no connection with contemporary American Negroes. Recognition of the former type of achievements builds a sound group pride and can cause no reaction of group self-hatred.

An illustration of how the racialistic attitude promotes group self-hatred is provided by the reaction of a Negro bishop to a British proposal to send approximately five thousand children, offspring of American Negro soldiers and English girls, to the United States. The bishop said that he was vigorously opposed to this proposal since "The intelligent Negroes of America are trying to discourage the mongrel in our race."<sup>51</sup> On the face of it, this attitude appears as a way of discouraging interracial sex contacts and thus promoting group identification. But in view of the fact that so many light-skinned Negroes are born every year, the attitude can be seen as a divisive influence in the Negro group and detrimental to group identification. Regarding the same ba-

<sup>51</sup> Bishop Emery J. Cain, president of the George Washington Carver Hospital and Home, Wrightville, Arkansas, as reported in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 26, 1947, p. 13.

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bies, a Negro correspondent in England reported that he received ten letters from American Negroes requesting adoption of a baby, provided one could be selected that was "light, with good hair."<sup>52</sup>

A more striking example of the negative effects of racialism on group morale is provided by those Negro businessmen who oppose even the Negro's struggle for civil rights — chiefly because they fear that the attainment of civil rights will increase the acceptance of Negroes by whites and will therefore decrease the competitive advantage of Negro businesses in the Negro community. Few are as outspoken as the president of the St. Louis Business League in the following statement, but a number of Negro businessmen could be found to agree with him in private conversation.

Civil Rights and other liberties for the Negro is sure to retard if not defeat the Negro in making economic progress in developing jobs and economic opportunities through business. The Negro's struggle for civil rights and integration, divides the Negro in his thinking as well as the method and plan to be pursued in the solving of his many problems. The Negro whose whole thought, desire and hope seem to be his acceptance and assimilation by the white man; he is confused and divided in his thoughts and actions, pulls further from his own people and this way hampers the Negro in making opportunity and progress through business as a definite economy for the Negro. . . .

Civil rights and all liberal movements have their counter part and consequences in the denial of economic opportunity by confusing the issues and drawing off support from the Negro in business or trade and thus prevent race solidarity. They give comfort and opportunity to inimical forces and cause the race to defeat its own ambitions and aspirations in years of suffering and denial until a resenting consciousness is built within, from abuse and other insults.<sup>53</sup>

It is easy to understand how group self-hatred diminishes

<sup>52</sup> *Los Angeles Tribune*, July 24, 1948, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Fred A. Jones, "Is Civil Rights a Liability or an Asset to the Negro Race?" *St. Louis Argus*, December 10, 1948.

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group identification and group morale. It should be just as obvious that whatever promotes group identification and morale — such as the Negro protest and contributions to race pride — will diminish group self-hatred. We shall give more attention to these factors in the following chapter. From his observations of the Catholic group, Lewin suggests another way to diminish group self-hatred — the group should demand great sacrifices from its members for highly valued causes.<sup>64</sup> When such sacrifices are demanded, the group member's conscience forces him to make them. Once the sacrifices are made, he has too great a stake in the group to feel group self-hatred.

Group self-hatred manifests itself in an attempt to escape the group. Thus any effort that draws individuals into organizations — where they are forced to associate with a wide variety of group members, especially in friendly and human situations — will tend to diminish group self-hatred. As friendships are built up, as aloofness is broken down, the "objectionable" traits of the minority group cannot be seen as so objectionable. The effects of Negro community organizations will be considered further in the following chapter; but in general the churches, clubs, fraternal organizations, athletic associations, and other organizations in the Negro community — if their membership is drawn from several layers of the community rather than from a single clique — are unconscious foes of Negro self-hatred.

<sup>64</sup> Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts*, p. 199.



## IV. THE PROMOTION of *Group Identification*

WE HAVE already considered in Chapter II the historical emergence of conditions and factors that promote Negro group identification. In this chapter we shall be primarily concerned with the working of these conditions and factors in the present day, especially those which are used deliberately to promote Negro group identification.

### COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

Myrdal states that "every agency working for assimilation of the Negro people in the broader American civilization, which is democratic in its fundamental values, is bound to strengthen the Negro protest against caste."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, we may begin with the proposition that every Negro community institution promotes group morale and group identification. We have already considered how this principle operates when people of diverse backgrounds and classes are brought together in friendly association and come thereby to recognize each other's good qualities. Another important factor is that a group of Negroes seldom gathers for any purpose for an hour or so without talking about the Negro problem and relating instances of injustice. Although the experience of the educated Negroes and whites who have made this generalization is limited, they feel it is true even of poor, uneducated Negroes in backward regions of the South.

Even when Negroes do not deliberately talk about the Negro problem, it slips into the conversation in their examples, allusions, and jokes. A young Negro social scientist who taught several classes at a state university, where the great majority of his students were whites, described his great

<sup>1</sup> Myrdal, *op. cit.*, p. 745.

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difficulties in communicating with his students. Every time he had to draw upon experience to describe a process or illustrate a point, he found himself referring to typical Negro experiences that every Negro, but few whites, would understand. When Negroes come together for any purpose, even in a casual meeting on the street corner, they spontaneously refer to these experiences and are unconsciously drawn closer to the Negro group that has shared them.

Mere talk of this sort may be frustrating and thus not raise morale, but it is almost certain to increase group consciousness. When a Negro has a conversation with a white man, on the other hand, he is almost inevitably forced to realize that the other man has not had the same experiences and does not belong to the same group, especially if the white man in any way emphasizes the fact that the other is a Negro. This may or may not heighten group identification for the Negro; but it is safe to say that when he is talking to other Negroes, his group consciousness is increased even though his point of view may be kept narrow.

Community institutions bring Negroes together regularly, and often frequently, and thus are major contributors to group identification. Specific institutions also have other effects on morale and identification. The schools throughout the South, and even in most of the North where segregation is not legal, are all-Negro schools, with Negro principals and teachers as well as pupils. Although the school curriculums are subject to fairly strict control by white boards of education, and in the South there is a certain amount of watching for "subversive" — that is, Negro protest — teaching, nevertheless the Negro children are taught a number of things which contribute to their group identification. Many of the schools observe Negro History Week every year. The regular history teaching is "race angled" — taught from the standpoint of the Negro — and is quite different from and on some points more accurate than the standard history texts. Some of the more independent schools give courses on the Negro

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or on race relations. At least one teacher manages to bring in the case for the Negro protest by taking up the Washington-Du Bois controversy over education. Negro subjects are often used in the art classes, and Negro songs—including the “Negro National Hymn”<sup>2</sup>—are taught in the music classes.

Moreover, the schools teach the ideals of the American Creed—democracy, liberty, equality—and of the American Dream—success, ambition, thrift, efficiency—and these are even more stirring to Negroes than to whites because the former are made to realize how often they are prevented from achieving these ideals. Finally, education itself has always meant to the Negro, as well as to the white man, a way of getting ahead. In all of these ways the schools have promoted morale and protest among Negroes, and through them have stimulated group identification.

The churches have sometimes been charged with providing an escapist philosophy and so diverting the Negro protest. There is, no doubt, considerable truth in this charge, especially with respect to the revivalist churches to which many lower-class Negroes belong. But the all-Negro church was probably the very first protest organization under slavery, and there are many aspects of the Negro church today which strongly promote Negro group identification. In the first place, Christianity is fundamentally a radical creed, and many Negro ministers take their texts from those sections of the Bible which favor equality and fraternity. Secondly, because the Negro community is too poor to support community or play centers and because in the South Negroes are not permitted access to the public parks or recreation centers, the church building is often the only place where Negroes can congregate for any purpose whatsoever. It thus becomes an assembly hall where they have their meetings,

<sup>2</sup> The words to this song—formally entitled “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing”—were composed by James Weldon Johnson in 1900 for a Lincoln’s Birthday celebration. (James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way* [New York: Viking Press, 1933], pp. 154-56.)

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talk over their common problems, hold many of their large social affairs, and so on.

A third way in which the Negro churches may promote group identification is through their ministers. Ministers sometimes become race leaders; they are trained for leadership and many of them are well educated in general. In some communities certain ministers are the chief leaders for all Negroes regardless of denomination. Among national Negro leaders who are or were ministers are A. Clayton Powell, Mordecai Johnson, and Benjamin E. Mays. A significant minority of Negro ministers take up the Negro problem in their sermons, and most of them have quite secular attitudes toward the problem. One Protestant minister even went so far as to express delight at his white confreres' discomfiture because Negroes were becoming Catholics in response to the Catholic church's policy of nonsegregation. While these are all signs that the Negro church contributes to group identification, the influence should not be exaggerated. Most Negro ministers are backward or otherworldly, and quite a number even preach accommodation to the existing caste situation.<sup>3</sup> A Negro writer evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the Negro church and notes the recent trend toward greater concern with the Negro problem:

While the Negro church of today does not approximate the vigorous instrument it was in the antislavery period, individual ministers nonetheless have spoken out clearly and have frequently mobilized forces for aggressive action in the Negro's cause. By writing letters, holding mass meetings, and threatening economic boycotts, certain ministers have helped to break down economic discriminations against the race. A survey conducted recently by Jerome H. Holland, a Negro professor at Lincoln University, to determine the attitude of the Negro clergy toward social injustice, showed that only 23 were opposed to any action

<sup>3</sup> An analysis of Negro ministers' sermons may be found in Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson, *The Negro's Church* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933).

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being taken by the Negro ministers out of a possible 776 answers. Asked whether they thought immediate action was imperative, 597 replied in the affirmative.

For a number of years following the first World War, the press rivaled the church as a medium of racial self-expression, concerned as the church was with purely religious functions. Today, the Negro church is attempting to recapture its former place in the secular life of the black man. New types of leaders are taking over — men who are trained, socially conscious, and forward-looking, with their fingers on the pulse of the Negro.<sup>4</sup>

A good number of Negro businesses and professional groups are propagandists for race pride. For one thing, it helps their business in that it promotes mass opposition to their white competitors. The "Patronize Your Own" propaganda is partially effective in getting Negroes to trade with Negro businessmen and professionals; but it has the further, indirect effect of promoting group identification, just as the slogan "Buy American," in extensive use before World War II, promoted national consciousness. For another thing, businessmen and professionals, like comparable "town boosters" among whites in the same occupations, are often the strongest advocates of keeping the community's appearance attractive and the population conforming to standards of respectability and propriety. They are among the most active in condemning the throwing of rubbish in the streets or the public display of rowdiness. In this superficial, but not completely unimportant, sense, therefore, they help to keep up the community's morale.

It is difficult to assess the influence of Negro voluntary associations — clubs, fraternal orders, burial societies, recreational organizations, and the like — on group identification. Some beat the drums of the Negro protest constantly and are themselves local improvement associations, although only a small number have this as their primary purpose. Others ignore the Negro problem completely or contribute to an atti-

<sup>4</sup> Ottley, *New World A-Coming*, pp. 222-23.

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tude of snobbishness toward, or a desire to escape from, the Negro lower class. There seems to be a greater proliferation of voluntary associations among Negroes than among whites,<sup>5</sup> although Americans generally are noted for having a large number. The best explanation seems to be that Negroes are unusually active in associations because they are not allowed to participate in much of the other organized life of American society—politics, trade-union activity, businessmen's groups, large-scale civic improvement and charity organizations, and the like. Robert R. Moton, successor to Booker T. Washington as principal of Tuskegee, has said that the tremendous amount of club activity among Negroes is, in one sense, a poor substitute for the political activity they would like to participate in, but cannot because of caste.<sup>6</sup>

To the extent that this is true, and so far as voluntary associations are only outlets for frustration, they impair Negro group identification. This tendency is corroborated by the fact that the clubs accomplish so little in comparison to what their members set out to achieve by means of them. "There is a pronounced tendency . . . for mutual aid associations and civic groups to become recreational associations."<sup>7</sup> The clubs are frustrating because they are time consuming and because the activities undertaken are heavily ritualized—thus drawing off time, effort, and money from the Negro protest. Those who do not like these features cannot escape them without cutting off many contacts with their fellows and losing some of their prestige. But even those who like the club life must feel frustrated, if only unconsciously.

In this situation, the voluntary associations are detrimen-

<sup>5</sup> The only studies on this subject known to the author make this point: J. G. St. Clair Drake, "The Negro Church and Associations in Chicago" (p. 438), and Allison Davis, "The Negro Church and Associations in the Lower South" (p. 139), unpublished manuscripts prepared for the Carnegie-Myrdal Study, 1940.

<sup>6</sup> Robert R. Moton, *Finding a Way Out* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1921), p. 170.

<sup>7</sup> Drake, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

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tal to group morale and thus ultimately detract from group identification. On the other hand, these negative aspects of club life sometimes ease the frustrations of Negro existence, thus giving the Negro more self-confidence to continue expressing protest. Ferguson claims that "The high-sounding titles of dignitaries, the complexity of organization, and the impressive rites and ritual, are a means of enhancing the Negro's self-respect against daily life as a member of a minority group; lodge politics serve to appease the desires of a disfranchised group and national organizations tend to unify a scattered people."<sup>8</sup>

### THE PRESS AND THE PROTEST ORGANIZATIONS

The community institutions just considered do not have the Negro protest or group identification as their primary aim. The protest organizations, on the other hand, do, and the Negro press, although it is controlled by businessmen out to make a profit, finds that voicing the Negro protest and appealing to race pride is the only way it can stay in business. The present editor of the *Chicago Defender* describes the aims of Robert S. Abbott, the founder of that successful Negro newspaper:

. . . he aspired "to influence the actions of millions of our unseen and unknown fellows." And in another piece he wrote, "I have made an issue of every single situation in which our people were denied their rightful share of participation." In these two statements he clearly outlined the basic strategy of his newspaper — group control over the Negro population and protest against the discriminatory policies of the white population.<sup>9</sup>

P. B. Young, editor of the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, expressed it thus: "Traditionally our press is a special pleader; it is an advocate of human rights."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth A. Ferguson, "Race Consciousness among American Negroes," *Journal of Negro Education*, VII (January 1938), 32-40.

<sup>9</sup> Lochard, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> "The Negro Press — Today and Tomorrow," *Opportunity*, 17 (July 1939), 205.

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The press and the protest organizations are both national and local institutions. Some newspapers are circulated almost solely in the cities where they are published—like the *Kansas City Call* or the *St. Louis Argus*—while others have a national circulation—the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*, for example. Still others—like the *Afro-American*—are published in several cities. The protest organizations have both national offices, which carry on a good deal of the work requiring experts, and local offices, to which ordinary people may belong and thereby express their protest.

The main strength of the Negro newspapers is that they reach practically all the Negro people, at least some of the time. The proportion of Negro families that regularly subscribe to at least one Negro newspaper varies from city to city and from social class to social class, as a study conducted in 1929-30 among a representative group of families in four Southern cities showed (Table 1). The findings indicate that

TABLE 1. PROPORTION OF NEGROES GETTING LOCAL AND OUT-OF-TOWN  
NEGRO NEWSPAPERS, BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP, FOR FOUR  
SELECTED SOUTHERN CITIES: 1929-1930

City and Source of Newspaper	Occupational Group		
	Common and Semiskilled Workers	Skilled Workers	Business and Professional Men
<b>Birmingham</b>			
Local . . . . .	11.0	27.8	25.7
Out-of-town . . . . .	14.4	13.9	24.3
<b>Atlanta</b>			
Local . . . . .	37.7	65.1	82.9
Out-of-town . . . . .	6.2	4.7	25.0
<b>Richmond</b>			
Local . . . . .	27.8	52.6	64.0
Out-of-town . . . . .	16.7	18.4	58.0
<b>Nashville</b>			
Local . . . . .	18.6	19.3	54.4
Out-of-town . . . . .	30.4	29.8	49.4

SOURCE: Paul K. Edwards, *The Southern Urban Negro as a Consumer* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1932), pp. 172-76.



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the upper occupational group read both the local and the out-of-town newspapers more than did the lower occupational groups; but more important is the fact that even among the lower occupational groups almost half the Negro families, except in Birmingham, took one paper or another.

In 1940 the 155 Negro newspapers had a combined weekly circulation of 1,276,600.<sup>11</sup> It is probably safe to estimate that there was a total circulation of around 1,300,000, but some of these papers went to the same families. Since there were 3,164,000 Negro families in 1940, over one-third of the Negro families in the United States were taking a Negro newspaper. In an independent study by Elizabeth D. Johns in Chicago it was estimated that one-third of the Negro adults of that city regularly read at least one Negro newspaper.<sup>12</sup> (One-third of all adults is a higher proportion than one-third of all families, since only one member of a family might read the paper.) Circulation increased markedly during the war as Negroes earned more money and their protest grew. The census report for 1945 showed a circulation of 1,809,000, representing a rise of 39 per cent.<sup>13</sup>

Actually the Negro newspaper has an audience considerably larger than its circulation figures would indicate, since much of its important content gets passed around by word of mouth to those who do not read it. The major news stories are regular topics of conversation whenever Negroes get together. The Negro newspaper is also available for casual reading in barbershops, and sometimes in churches, lodges, and pool parlors. It is certain that the Negro newspaper is read considerably more in cities than in rural areas. Even in many isolated parts of the South, however, it is a large

<sup>11</sup> U.S. census figures cited in Florence Murray (ed.), *The Negro Handbook*, 1942 (New York: Wendell Malliet and Co., 1942), p. 201.

<sup>12</sup> "The Role of the Negro Newspaper in the Negro Community," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1942.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Negro Newspapers and Periodicals in the U.S.," Negro Statistical Bulletin No. 1 (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1946).

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Northern Negro newspaper that is most frequently read.<sup>14</sup> While the Negro newspaper reaches a very large proportion of the Negro population, it is an "extra paper" — read once a week in addition to the daily white newspapers.

In content, the Negro newspaper is primarily a reporter of discrimination against Negroes and achievements of Negroes. In a twelve-year (1926–37) study of the front page of the *Chicago Defender*, Drake and Cayton found the following proportions of space given over to these different subjects: crime (against Negroes and by Negroes), 22.3 per cent; cartoons and pictures, 18.8 per cent; "people," 7.7 per cent; government and politics, 6.7 per cent; interracial relations, 6.1 per cent; accidents, 4.7 per cent; and community affairs, 4.6 per cent.<sup>15</sup> A "press analysis" conducted by *Fortune* in 1945 shows that the first pages of twenty-eight Negro newspapers had the following distribution of space: 32 per cent was news exclusively about Negroes; 35 per cent was given over to reporting or furthering friendly Negro-white relations; 18 per cent was unfavorable to whites' conduct of Negro-white relations; and only 15 per cent was neutral on Negro-white relations.<sup>16</sup>

The Negro newspaper reports all the activities of the Negro protest organizations and thus increases the readers' hopes. It also reports the activities of many of the churches and clubs, thereby providing not only specific information of interest, but giving readers the feeling of security and belongingness that comes from knowledge of an institutionalized world. The sports columns increase race pride, as do the comics. Even the little notes are in terms of "race" — a front-page square in the *Pittsburgh Courier* reads:

<sup>14</sup> From an unpublished study by Charles S. Johnson in certain localities in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. Cited by Detweiler, *op. cit.*, pp. 10–11.

<sup>15</sup> Drake and Cayton, *op. cit.*, p. 402. Only the seven leading categories are reported here; the remaining subjects totaled 29.1 per cent of the newspaper space.

<sup>16</sup> "Fortune Press Analysis: Negroes," *Fortune*, 31 (May 1945), 233ff.

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Who owned the First Car:

"Jack Johnson," says Tommie Nance of Chicago.

"Pat Chappell," insists Otis C. Hanley of Miami.<sup>17</sup>

The whole newspaper flatters the group and helps to make it feel self-confident and superior.

The Negro newspaper also criticizes the group and tries thereby to improve it. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, for example, has a "Your Public Conduct" campaign, with a short message on the front page nearly every week. Not infrequently a special column is devoted to complaining about some phase of Negro conduct or to noting an improvement in another phase. Such an article, however, is almost always accompanied by a condemnation of the white man's criticism of Negroes based on stereotypes. For example, in a column praising Negro audience behavior at a baseball game in Chicago when Jackie Robinson played, Joseph D. Bibb says:

There were fears and apprehensions that some unlearned and untutored buffoons would attempt to put on their act and create a scene, but colored Chicago prepared to nip such actions in the bud and show the sports' world that colored Americans were ready for Democracy in athletics. It has been long contended that we Americans of mixed bloods and swarthy complexions, are not ready for vaunted freedoms and liberties of a true Democracy. We are now engaged in proving the fallacy in such assertions.<sup>18</sup>

Often criticism of the group makes a direct appeal to group solidarity. Negroes are constantly berated for not "sticking together." The *Cleveland Call Post* has had a regular column entitled "Handkerchief Heads," a term of derogation for those who bow to the white man and do not participate in the Negro protest.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 26, 1947, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> "Superb Conduct," *ibid.*, June 7, 1947, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Other newspapers handle group "traitors" with incidental stories. The *Pittsburgh Courier* for January 31, 1948 (p. 22), for example, has a six-column-inch story entitled "Some Uncle Toms Still Left - Like This Redcap." The story is about a redcap in Tennessee who would not put a Negro wom-

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Because so few white men ever see a Negro newspaper, the reporters and columnists create a "just-among-us-Negroes" atmosphere and reveal things they would want no white man to read. While Southern Negro newspapers are not as aggressive as Northern ones,<sup>20</sup> they are far more outspoken in the Negro protest than any other means of public expression in the South. In a column by the executive editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier* the following story is told about what happened when some wealthy white Texans approached the president of Meharry College in Nashville, Tennessee, to inquire about the possibility of moving Meharry to Texas, in order to meet the court's requirement that Negroes be given equal educational facilities:

. . . they floored the Meharry president by asking him how much it would cost to move Meharry College to Texas, to the campus of Prairie View College. President Clawson of Meharry could see that they were in earnest. He took out his pencil, chewed the end of it for a minute while looking for a piece of paper, then started figuring, fully conscious of at least two hundred eighty million dollars in the background. After placing a generous estimate on all expenses involved, Dr. Clawson is said to have simply doubled the figure, turned to the Texans and announced: "Twenty-five million dollars, gentlemen!" The spokesman for the group studied the Meharry president's figures indifferently, then casually drawled: "That's just about what we thought. We thought it would take between twenty-five and forty million dollars." <sup>21</sup>

This sort of secret-telling, plus the idea of putting something over on the whites, promotes a we-feeling among the Negro readers and thereby contributes to group identification.

The opinions expressed in the editorials and columns and the selection of news items are remarkably similar in all Negro newspapers. This resemblance is undoubtedly caused by an's bags on the railroad car for whites even though she had a first-class ticket and was going to cross a state line.

<sup>20</sup> "Fortune Press Analysis: Negroes," 235ff.

<sup>21</sup> P. L. Prattis, "The Horizon," *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 7, 1947, p. 7.

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the common demands of the reading public and the similar orientation of the reporters and writers. Even the Southern Negro newspapers give a relatively aggressive expression to the Negro protest, and, as we have seen, many Southern Negroes read Northern newspapers. The aggressive protest, the group flattery, and the appeals to race pride are undoubtedly what the readers want. Negro group identification is both reflected in and stimulated by the Negro press. Through the Negro newspaper the individual Negro shares in the sufferings, grievances, and pretensions of Negroes far outside his local community. This creates a feeling of strength and solidarity, and in this way the press helps greatly to create the Negro group as a social and psychological reality for the individual Negro.

Two kinds of Negro publications other than newspapers also play a role in group identification—magazines and books. There were one hundred Negro magazines and periodical bulletins published in the United States in 1945. Magazines like *Ebony* and the *Negro Digest* copy the formats of the national magazines *Life* and the *Reader's Digest*, but in content they resemble the Negro newspapers. They appeal to race pride through stories and pictures of Negro life and achievement, and they are full of stirring protest. The *Crisis* and *Opportunity* are organs of Negro protest and improvement organizations. The *Journal of Negro Education*, the *Journal of Negro History*, and *Phylon* are scholarly sources of description of Negro life. The circulation of Negro magazines is not as broad as that of the newspapers, and their less frequent appearance reduces their emphasis on reporting the latest shocking incidents of racial injustice. Thus the magazines have less influence on group identification than the newspapers.

Most of the books by Negroes have a still smaller distribution and even less relation to day-by-day reality, and their influence tends to be correspondingly smaller. But there are

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noteworthy exceptions. Some of the popular histories put out by J. A. Rogers and Carter Woodson are sold almost on a door-to-door basis. Certain autobiographies that tell the story of Negro achievement, of Negroes fighting caste, and of the hardships of Negro life have almost become classics which every literate Negro hopes to read. Notable among these have been Frederick Douglass' *Autobiography*, Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*, W. E. B. Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk* and *Dusk of Dawn*, James Weldon Johnson's *Along This Way*, and probably in the future Walter White's recently published *A Man Called White*. To this list could be added, except for the technicality that it is fiction (although it was thought to be fact for many years), James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of An Ex-Coloured Man*. This book, first published in 1912, undoubtedly helped to discourage passing and to encourage the attitude that it was a splendid thing to be a Negro.

There is little more to be said about the effects on Negro group identification of the protest and improvement organizations than the points already discussed. They are certainly one of the most important forces. Nearly every time a Negro newspaper reports an incident of violence or case of discrimination against Negroes, it also reports that the NAACP or some other protest organization has made a ringing complaint or is preparing to take the case to the courts. In fighting the bully, the protest organization acts as a big brother to the average Negro and prevents him from losing self-confidence. He realizes that strength lies in his group, even if he himself is weak.

At the end of 1947 the membership of the NAACP—the most important of the protest organizations—was 550,000, and was going up. This is only a small proportion of the adult Negro population, but it is nevertheless extraordinarily large for a liberal action group in the United States, where generally such organizations do not attract a mass follow-

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ing. Even more significant is the fact that the great bulk of the Negro population is behind the NAACP in spirit if not in actual membership.<sup>22</sup> This situation is in striking contrast to the very limited membership and popularity of the Jewish or Mexican protest organizations in the United States.

In a real crisis, the leaders of the NAACP could probably get a very large proportion of the Negro population to act in concert. This, in a sense, did happen during World War I when Du Bois asked Negroes to suspend protest against the federal government for the duration of the war; and again just before World War II, when a number of Negro leaders—headed by A. Philip Randolph and including Walter White—asked Negroes to hold local mass meetings preparatory to a March on Washington in order to stop discrimination in war industry. Both of these appeals were remarkably successful, even though the first one later backfired. Of course, no organization leader could successfully ask the Negro people to take an action unless it was obviously for the good of the people and unless he had at least the passive acquiescence of the other Negro leaders.

Although it has a number of specific goals, the work of the NAACP generally is to secure equal laws and equal application of the laws for Negroes, to oppose all forms of segregation, and to present the grievances of Negroes to the American public. These are the goals which have the strongest support of the Negro people, and the NAACP is the largest, most influential, and best-staffed organization fighting for these goals. It has had striking successes, at least

<sup>22</sup> A sizable proportion of Negroes are completely apathetic to the NAACP, of course, but the only real opposition to it from within the Negro population comes from four small groups: (1) some Southern, upper-class Negroes who feel that the NAACP is radical or tactless and stirs up trouble; (2) those Negro intellectuals who have been influenced by Marxism and feel that economic revolution instead of change in laws is the solution of the Negro problem; (3) those Negro nationalists who do not want to work with white people of any type and who do not like light-colored Negro leaders; and (4) a few individuals who disapprove of the specific policies or the specific leaders of the NAACP.

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when it has been able to bring legal cases before the federal courts. Thus the Negro people can give their moral support to the NAACP, feel that it does some good, and in turn receive a boost in their group morale and group identification.

A word should be said about the influence of the Negro leaders, both in and out of the protest organizations. Negroes have been fortunate in having some very talented leaders — men who would rank high in politics and business if they were white. Both the caste situation and a strong sense of group identification cause men who have reached high levels in other occupations to go into group leadership, a fact that largely accounts for the high caliber of the leaders. College administrators like Booker T. Washington and Mary McLeod Bethune, social scientists like W. E. B. Du Bois and Charles S. Johnson, lawyers like Charles H. Houston and William H. Hastie, and others from other occupations have gone into Negro leadership either temporarily or permanently.

Although the leaders get brickbats along with bouquets when they are conducting the practical, day-to-day affairs of fighting the Negro's cause, the average Negro takes pride in their abilities. As any group member is likely to say of a courageous or talented leader, Negroes will say, "We're lucky to have a man like ——." This is especially apparent when a leader retires or dies. Du Bois has passed the age of eighty and now receives the admiration and respect of most Negroes, even though he currently expresses attitudes with which a great many disagree. Even Booker T. Washington, as criticized as he was by the rising generation and the Northern migrants, is today remembered for his political astuteness. Lesser leaders receive lesser amounts of veneration but are seldom forgotten. A publisher like Robert S. Abbott, for example, is better remembered by Negroes than a publisher like Adolph Ochs is remembered by whites. In their admiration for their group leaders, Negroes increase their group identification.



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### HATRED OF WHITES AND GLORIFICATION OF NEGROES

In the examples of Negro hatred of whites and Negro self-glorification that we have already examined, some were of a type that promotes group identification, while others were the sort that rebounds and produces group self-hatred. In further considering Negro feelings of the first type, we find that in general they are very much like what is encouraged in the armed forces of a nation as "pride in outfit," "loyalty to the nation," and "hatred of the enemy." There is regular indoctrination in these attitudes among Negroes, even though it is more informal than that practiced in the armed forces. Richard Wright, the famous Negro novelist, tells how he experienced this indoctrination in the Deep South:

Having grown taller and older, I now associated with older boys and I had to pay for my admittance into their company by subscribing to certain racial sentiments. The touchstone of fraternity was my feeling toward white people, how much hostility I held toward them, what degrees of value and honor I assigned to race. None of this was premeditated, but sprang spontaneously out of the talk of black boys who met at the crossroads.<sup>23</sup>

This hatred of white people is not pathological — far from it. It is a healthy human reaction to oppression, insult, and terror. White people are often surprised at the Negroes' hatred of them, but it should not be surprising.

The whole world knows that the Nazis murdered millions of Jews and can suspect that the remaining Jews are having some emotional reaction to that fact. Negroes, on the other hand, are either ignored or thought to be so subhuman that they have no feelings when one of their number is killed because he was a Negro. Probably no week goes by in the United States that some Negro is not severely beaten, and the news is reported in the Negro press. Every week or maybe twice a week almost the entire Negro population of the United States suffers an emotional recoil from some insult

<sup>23</sup> Richard Wright, *Black Boy* (New York: Harper, 1937), p. 68. Copyright 1945 by Richard Wright.

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coming from the voice or pen of a leading white man. The surviving Jews had one, big, soul-racking "incident" that wrenched them back to group identification. The surviving Negroes experience constant jolts that almost never let them forget for even an hour that they are Negroes. In this situation, hatred of whites and group identification are natural reactions.

A leading Negro social scientist admitted in private conversation that he believed *all* Negroes hated whites. Of course, there is considerable variation in this hatred from individual to individual. Most Negroes spend only a few minutes in each day hating whites, and they may not hate every day. A few Negroes spend many of their waking hours hating whites; some of these soon become mentally ill — usually the end result or at least the accompaniment of any obsession; others learn to sublimate their almost ever-present hatred into writing, painting, or group leadership. The latter — two or three of whom are known to the writer — seem to be perfectly well adjusted and happy. Then there are some Negroes who never hate whites, but these are the ones who soon come to hate Negroes, in the usual causal pattern of group self-hatred.

One way of expressing hatred of whites is to avoid becoming white when the opportunity offers itself. It is much easier to pass than the white man suspects, especially when there are so many dark-skinned Mediterranean whites in the country. Since Negroes and passers themselves are reluctant to give information about those who pass, and since census data and vital statistics are too inaccurate to catch discrepancies that are explainable only as passing, it is impossible to measure the number who pass. However, various investigators have made use of the inaccurate data, often without being properly critical, and have come up with some figures.<sup>24</sup> While the figures themselves are inaccurate,

<sup>24</sup> The studies published up to 1942 have been summarized in Myrdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 1207-8.

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a comparison of them is suggestive. Using the census-vital statistics method, Hornell Hart estimated that during the decade 1900-10, 25,000 Negroes passed each year.<sup>25</sup> Using almost the same method for the decade 1930-40, Eckard found that less than 2,000 Negroes a year were passing.<sup>26</sup> Whether these figures are nearly accurate or not, the trend they indicate is in accord with expert Negro opinion — namely, that passing has declined markedly since the period of low Negro morale from 1890 to 1910. Certainly there are few Negroes who are beginning to pass knowingly today.

Rivalry with whites is another way of expressing hatred of whites and self-glorification. It is probable that when a Negro prize fighter knocks out a white opponent, many Negroes are pleased not only because they feel he is showing white people that a Negro has ability, but also because a Negro is hitting and hurting a white man. An appeal to rivalry with whites is likely to get an active response from a group of Negroes. For example, a campaign was started by the Negro noncommissioned officers of Camp Lee, Virginia, to reduce venereal disease. The Negro VD rate is notoriously high, and all previous efforts of the command and medical authorities to reduce it had little effect. But the two Negro noncoms appealed to race pride and reduced the VD rate 70 per cent in six months.<sup>27</sup>

Negro businessmen and professionals sometimes make this same type of appeal to race pride in soliciting business for themselves. An example is provided by the Negro press in its campaign to get the interest of national advertisers. In the summer of 1941, large advertisements of Philip Morris

<sup>25</sup> *Selective Migration as a Factor in Child Welfare in the United States, with Special Reference to Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1921), pp. 28-29.

<sup>26</sup> E. W. Eckard, "How Many Negroes 'Pass'?" *American Journal of Sociology*, LII (May 1947), 498-500. This finding was substantially the same as one found for the same period, using a different method, by John H. Burma, "The Measurement of Negro 'Passing,'" *American Journal of Sociology*, LII (July 1946), 18-20.

<sup>27</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 26, 1947, p. 22.

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cigarettes suddenly appeared in three Negro newspapers. The cigarette advertisers sought to test whether Negroes would respond to a direct appeal made through the Negro press. The *Pittsburgh Courier* made it the subject of an editorial:

If that campaign goes over, not only those newspapers but many Negro newspapers will be used by cigarette companies who are interested in the Negro market. . . . Philip Morris Cigarette has had the courage and the nerve, even in the face of competitive criticism, to give the Negro market a chance through its newspapers; and it is up to every Negro who smokes cigarettes to consider this appeal.<sup>28</sup>

Although there is this general hatred of whites that manifests itself in many ways, Negroes will support a white man who has helped their fight for justice and equality. The strong support for Presidents Roosevelt and Truman is one evidence of this, but an incident of lesser significance provides a better example. During the late months of World War II, General John Lee secured for Negroes the opportunity to fight in nonsegregated units, where they proved to be a success. Many Negroes considered this opportunity a major victory in their fight to break down segregation. When General Lee was transferred to Italy after the war was over, a white newspaper publicized a series of charges against him that he was unfair and brutal to enlisted soldiers. Many Negro soldiers in Italy wrote letters home coming to his defense. The National Negro Press Association, in a dispatch sent by its Washington correspondent, Louis R. Lautier, to all its member newspapers, indicated that colored troops preferred life under General Lee in Italy to life in the United States. Columnists like Prattis wrote their belief that Lee was being attacked because he had been fair to Negroes.<sup>29</sup> The incident reveals the amount of support a white man can

<sup>28</sup> Quoted from Ottley, *'New World A-Coming,'* p. 281.

<sup>29</sup> P. L. Prattis, "The Horizon," *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 30, 1947, p. 7.

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earn by a single outstanding act that demonstrates fairness toward Negroes.

Whites may be despised as well as hated. Just as some Negroes reveal a true prejudice toward whites in their hatred of them, so some Negroes see whites in terms of stereotypes. One educated Negro confessed that even when he was completely accepted by Northern liberal whites he felt apart from them. The most frequent stereotype seems to be that whites are a cruel, cold race. The most important fallacy in this conception stems from the fact that these Negroes do not see the differences among whites, for their personal experiences with many whites do reveal coldness and cruelty.

The prejudice of a minority group against the majority is a subtle and complicated thing. It is, in part at least, different in cause and in form from the prejudice the majority feels toward the minority. Although our knowledge of the general causes of prejudice is as yet inadequate, the special causes of Negro prejudice against whites seem clearer. There are not only the stereotyping produced by social distance and the antagonism resulting from frustration and insult, but there is also a relatively positive feeling toward the Negro's own group. While he is usually more than courteous toward a friendly white man, the Negro feels that he must constantly gauge the point beyond which the white can no longer be trusted. Sometimes, on the basis of a few harsh past experiences, the Negro will judge this point to be lower than it actually is, and will thereby manifest prejudice against whites. In other words, there is an element of the feeling that "all whites are alike—you can't really trust them" in most Negroes' relations with whites.

Associated with this sense of distrust is a positive feeling toward the Negro group. While of course individual Negroes have the full range of attitudes toward other individual Negroes, there is a feeling that with any Negro one is safe in expressing resentment against whites or telling a joke de-

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rogatory to the Negro group itself. (A minor exception would be the "race traitor," or stool pigeon, in some parts of the rural South, but they are now extremely rare. Certainly not all "Uncle Toms" are stool pigeons — "Uncle Toms" play a compromise role with the whites, while stool pigeons tell whites what is going on in the Negro community.) The mere fact that Negroes feel that they must measure and test a white man for his prejudice is a barrier that creates prejudice in the measurers. This feeling becomes tied up with the ordinary consequences of social distance — Negroes use words, expressions, and allusions that most whites do not understand. This fact in turn contributes to a further increase of social distance, and ultimately of prejudice.

### HUMOR

Another type of derogation of whites occurs in the form of humor — jokes at the expense of white people are made and passed around with an intensity of effort that shows they are not merely jokes. Some of the jokes are so bitter as almost to lack humor, thus revealing their kinship to hatred:

"It says in the white folks' newspapers that our women are going to ruin the white folks' homes by quitting their jobs as maids."

"Yeah, a lot of white women are mad because they have to bring up their own children." <sup>30</sup>

A good many jokes are frankly protest in nature:

I went into the store at —— to get some tobacco. I asked for "Prince Albert" and the clerk said "See the man on that can. He's white. Say 'Mister Prince Albert.'" I thought for a minute and then said "No thank you, sir; I believe I'll just take Bull Durham; I don't have to 'mister' him!" <sup>31</sup>

Some of the jokes that reveal the Negro's plight in the South are of the same character as the jokes that have come down

<sup>30</sup> Myrdal, *op. cit.*, p. 961.

<sup>31</sup> John H. Burma, "Humor as a Technique in Race Conflict," *American Sociological Review*, 11 (December 1946), 713-14.

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from the period of slavery. Drake and Cayton call this type the "double-edged joke" — because its humor is based both on the white man's meannesses and susceptibilities and on the Negro's willingness to cater to them — and offer the following example:

A Negro drives through a red light in a Mississippi town. The sheriff yells, "Hey, boy, where you think you going?" The Negro thinks fast and answers: "Well, boss, when I see that green light come on an' all them white folks' cars goin' through, I says to myself, 'That's the white folks' light!' So I don' move. Then when that ol' red light comes on, I jus' steps on the gas. I says, 'That mus' be us niggers' light!'" The sheriff replies, "You're a good boy, Sam, but next time you kin go on the white folks' light."<sup>32</sup>

Other jokes do not reflect hatred of whites as much as social distance from them. These jokes refer to situations which Negroes understand immediately, but which some whites have to think over for a moment before they see the point. For example:

Two Negro maids were comparing notes. One says: "At my place I have a terrible time, all day its 'Yes Ma'am,' 'Yes Ma'am,' 'Yes Ma'am.'"

"Me too," says the other, "but with me it's 'No Sir,' 'No Sir,' 'No Sir.'"<sup>33</sup>

Langston Hughes attributes another joke of the same type to a Negro college president.<sup>34</sup> The president was descending the train steps at Atlanta when he heard a scream behind him. A white woman had caught her heel and was falling down the steps. The Negro raised his arms to catch her, then quickly dropped them to his sides and let her fall. At this point the joke ends and Negro listeners roar with laughter.

<sup>32</sup> Drake and Cayton, *op. cit.*, p. 723.

<sup>33</sup> Burma, "Humor as a Technique in Race Conflict," 712.

<sup>34</sup> *The Best of Negro Humor* (Chicago: Negro Digest Publications, 1945), p. 96. Cited by Burma, "Humor as a Technique in Race Conflict," 714.

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It is easy to see how such jokes contribute to Negro group identification.

Another form of Negro humor is the suggestion, based on good chance probability, that some Southern whites have Negro blood in them. This was recently suggested by the Negro press about Senator Ellender of Louisiana, who has been one of the most vigorous opponents of a fair employment practices bill. The senator has short curly hair, almost woolly, and the press has humorously regretted that records were not available for looking up the senator's family tree.

### POLITICS AND BUSINESS

When Negroes are not restrained from voting, they tend to vote in great numbers. Voting becomes a manifestation of protest and group pride. It is difficult to get statistics on Negro voting, however, since ballots are not in any way separated by race; but a few investigators have studied how all-Negro districts in certain cities vote. In Chicago in 1930, 77 per cent of the adults of an all-Negro ward registered as compared to 68 per cent of the entire city.<sup>35</sup> In Detroit, Negroes were found to vote in smaller proportions than did the whites;<sup>36</sup> but since poor people generally vote less than people who are economically better off, and since most Negroes are poor, these data do not support conclusions that Negroes were politically apathetic.

As barriers against Negro voting have broken down in the South during the last two or three years, stories of significant voting by Negroes come out of many Southern communities. One recent newspaper report stated that Negroes in Virginia, prodded by the NAACP, actually voted in proportionately greater numbers than did whites.<sup>37</sup> In another report that Negro registration in Louisiana had risen 400 per cent in one year (Louisiana is the one state where Negro voters

<sup>35</sup> Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Litchfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-74.

<sup>37</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 16, 1947, p. 1.



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are counted separately, so that the figures are accurate), Negroes were held to have aided the new mayor to win over his incumbent opponent in the last election and to have cast the deciding votes in the extension of the city limits of Baton Rouge.<sup>38</sup> There is pride in these reports, just as there must be pride among the Negro voters of these Southern communities.

Because there is so little business owned by Negroes, what little there is arouses pride in Negroes throughout the nation. Negro owners of banks, life insurance companies, and small manufacturing concerns are regularly in the news and are praised highly. When a man like Major R. R. Wright dies, the stories in the Negro newspapers make him out almost as a national hero, when his main achievement, in this case, was simply to build up a small but successful bank.<sup>39</sup> Negro businessmen themselves take race into consideration, of course, and are not merely "economic men." For example, in 1946 a group of Chicago business and professional men subscribed over \$150,000 to a new corporation, the purpose of which is to lend money to Negroes who want to start businesses or build houses. This was probably the first time any such cooperative action occurred, however, since even well-to-do Negroes generally assume that they are too poor to engage in any sort of philanthropy.<sup>40</sup>

### SPONTANEOUS DISPLAY OF PROTEST AND THE UNITY OF AIMS

Certain types of behavior on the part of whites are interpreted by Negroes as expressions of prejudice, and they have learned to respond to them spontaneously, almost automatically, in a negative fashion. Each such unanimous display of protest increases group morale and group identification. The behavior regarded as insulting is manifold—reflecting the

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, August 23, 1947, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> The headline in the *Pittsburgh Courier* read "Nation Mourns Major R. R. Wright." (July 12, 1947, p. 1.)

<sup>40</sup> See pages 71-73 of this book. Also see George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 21, 1947, p. 7.

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complications of the caste system in the South—and the unlearned white who does not wish to offend has almost to travel with a Baedeker's guide when he goes among Negroes. Offensive behavior includes referring to a Negro as a "darky," "uncle," or "doctor" (when the person is not a doctor). It includes any sort of manifestation of segregation, from separation at dining tables to taking a rear seat in an automobile when driving with Negroes. It includes making any sort of reference to Negroes as being different in any of the stereotyped ways, such as being musically inclined, happy-go-lucky, or addicted to eating watermelons or chicken.

Sometimes a spontaneous display of protest is given widespread coverage in the Negro press, so that Negroes all over the country participate vicariously in the rebuff. Recently, for example, an elaborate dinner party was given honoring the hundredth anniversary of the *Chicago Tribune*. Thirty leading Negroes of Chicago were invited along with hundreds of white citizens, but when the Negroes arrived they found that three tables had been set aside for them. They politely left the party, leaving the three empty tables as glaring reminders to the white guests. No single Negro could have stayed at this party without suffering future ostracism from the entire Negro community.

Sometimes spontaneous protest occurs even when it is obvious that the white offender had not the slightest intention of displaying prejudice. In such a case the Negro attitude is that the white man "must be taught," and while he can be excused, the incident should not be overlooked. The following newspaper story gives a case in point:

Columnist Walter Winchell, who has preached racial tolerance and understanding since the end of World War II, slipped up here last week and used the word "pickaninny" while addressing an audience at Salem Church.

Mr. Winchell, who reportedly speaks to 25,000,000 radio listeners every Sunday night, quickly apologized, however, and the incident has apparently been dropped.

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At the invitation of the Interdenominational Ministers' meeting, Mr. Winchell came to Harlem Wednesday night to receive the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Brotherhood Medal. During the speech he mentioned that his wife asked one agency to get the famed couple another baby for adoption, "even if it's a pick-aninny."

The audience was as cold as "Alaska in Winter" but nobody booed the commentator. Afterward, one member of the audience explained that Negroes did not like the term, so Winchell apologized by saying he was sorry and "didn't realize it at all."<sup>41</sup>

Spontaneous displays of protest illustrate a point that has become increasingly apparent among Negroes during the past thirty years—that on certain matters Negroes have been converging toward unity of aims. Even the "compromise leaders" of the South, who try to keep peace with the whites at almost any cost, and the Negro Communists, who subordinate their demands for the Negro to their demands for "all workers," are part of this unity. The few Negroes who feel otherwise camouflage their deviations heavily with pseudo-science (like those who say that "laws cannot change folkways") or with redefinitions (like those who interpret Marxian philosophy in Negro protest terms).

This unity of aims can be illustrated in thousands of ways. We choose to illustrate it with a recent book edited by Rayford H. Logan, entitled *What the Negro Wants*,<sup>42</sup> because the incidents connected with the publication of this book are interesting in themselves. Logan, a professor of history at Howard University, was requested by the University of North Carolina Press to ask a representative group of Negro leaders and writers to write, independently, short essays indicating what they felt to be the Negro's demands. Logan conscientiously selected fourteen representative Negroes:

<sup>41</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 21, 1947, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> Rayford H. Logan, *What the Negro Wants* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

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five radicals, five liberals, and four conservatives.<sup>48</sup> There were included at least one Communist, at least one Socialist, and several strong Republicans and Democrats. Four were then living and working in the South, and all but three were born in the South.

The striking thing about the book is the similarity of the essays, despite the independence of the writers from each other and from the editor, and despite their diversity of background. Only one Southern conservative writer deviates from the rest by being so euphemistic in his writing that it is impossible to tell what he wants. The following list shows some of the leading demands and the number of writers, out of the fourteen, who give expression to them.

Full political equality (included equal right to vote) . .	12
Full economic equality and equality of opportunity . .	12
Abolition of public segregation or full social equality . .	12

The publisher of the University of North Carolina Press was not prepared for this unity, and after some delay in getting the book to press, he went to the almost unparalleled extreme of writing a "Publisher's Introduction" in addition to the Editor's Preface. This introduction is a white Southerner's statement of disagreement with the editor and the contributors, and, even more strongly, with the Myrdal-Serner-Rose volume, *An American Dilemma*, which the publisher believes is a dangerous book, though typifying what the Negro wants. In a review of *What the Negro Wants*, Charles S. Johnson, who is sometimes called the leader of Southern Negro conservatives, spends most of his space wittily attacking the "Publisher's Introduction" — thus further exemplifying the unity of aims among Negroes:

If the premise is a democratic America, it may be said that the publisher's introduction is the best possible statement of an impossible position. This remarkable introduction seems to im-

<sup>48</sup> This classification is not based solely on the present writer's judgment, but is identical with that given by the editor (*ibid.*, p. vii).

## *The Negro's Morale*

ply, first, that Negroes ought not to want what these leaders say they want and, second, (and still more surprisingly) that having been asked the question, they should not have answered it.<sup>44</sup>

This unity of aims is both an effect and a cause of Negro group identification. The fact that there is so little deviation, and that little so frowned upon by Negroes, politically weak and socially disorganized though they are, is a consequence of the high morale and solidarity of Negroes which we have been calling group identification. On the other hand, every public display of the unity of aims, even in such a book as *What the Negro Wants*, is a force contributing to stronger group identification. Thus every incident — a lynching, a new form of segregation, an insult by a high public official — which offers an opportunity for a display of unity also indirectly promotes group identification.

<sup>44</sup> *American Journal of Sociology*, 11 (April 1946), 244-45.

## V. SOLIDARITY *with Other Subordinated Groups*

AMERICAN Negroes, at least the literate among them, exhibit a high degree of sympathy for the underdog in different parts of the world. This sympathy is extended mainly to other black or brown people but is evident even in the case of the Chinese. Race in a technical sense is not nearly as important as color in eliciting this response, since there is a high degree of concern for the people of India, who are technically Caucasoids. So great is the Negro's concern for India that the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender* maintained regular Indian columnists who wrote mainly of the struggles of the colored people of Asia. In the current conflict between the Dutch and the Indonesians, the Negro press has given relatively more space to these events than the white papers have, and nearly every columnist in the *Courier* devoted at least one column to them. In none of these writings was there even an attempt at neutrality in tone.

This feeling of solidarity is expressed even though there is practically no reciprocity. In fact, most of the writers are undoubtedly aware that individual Hindus, for example, when they come to the United States do all they can to dissociate themselves from Negroes. The feeling of solidarity is extended by Negroes to two main groups—colored peoples and underdogs, especially when the oppressors are white. There was even a certain amount of sympathy for the Japanese government during World War II because it was a case of colored people fighting whites; but this feeling was out-

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balanced by sympathy for the Chinese and loyalty to the American government.<sup>1</sup>

Coming under both these categories, and further allied with American Negroes on the basis of ancestry, are African Negroes. Some Negro intellectuals have deliberately abjured any connection with Africa, preferring to stress the struggle in America; and the Negro masses have never exhibited any real desire to go to Africa, even when whites have made it financially possible for them to do so. Nevertheless much of Garvey's appeal was in terms of a mythical back-to-Africa movement, and there is still considerable interest in Africa and sympathy with the Negroes there. Du Bois has written several books on African problems and so have other American Negroes; several poets have included African themes in their writings. Even a protest leader like Walter White, when he traveled overseas in war-time to inspect army conditions for Negro soldiers, devoted a chapter or more of his report to the role of African blacks in the war.<sup>2</sup>

The international issue that most aroused the sympathy of American Negroes was the Italo-Ethiopian war. The black nationalists of Harlem sought to capitalize on it,<sup>3</sup> and the liberals and radicals pointed out its lessons in favor of democracy; but Negroes became concerned chiefly because dark African people were the victims of a white nation's aggression. The Ethiopian government, anxious to get support wherever it could in the world, sent official representatives to Black America. Mass meetings were held, organizations were formed, funds were subscribed, and pamphlets were published. Ottley evaluates the significance of these events:

From the beginning the Ethiopian crisis became a fundamental question in Negro life. It was all but impossible for Negro leaders to remain neutral, and the position they took toward the

<sup>1</sup> Drake and Cayton, *op. cit.*, pp. 745-46; Myrdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 814-15, 1400.

<sup>2</sup> *A Rising Wind* (New York: Doubleday, 1945).

<sup>3</sup> Ottley, *New World A-Coming*, p. 105 *et passim*.

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conflict became a fundamental test. The survival of the black nation became the topic of angry debate in poolrooms, barber shops, and taverns. Emperor Haile Selassie I was hailed by some Negroes as the new "messiah"—one writer described him as "a black edition of the pictured Christ." . . . I know of no event in recent times that stirred the rank-and-file of Negroes more than the Italo-Ethiopian War. . . . Clearly, Negroes in America had cast their lot with colored peoples elsewhere in the world.<sup>4</sup>

Although it was a strong sympathy and even a solidarity that American Negroes felt for Ethiopians, they still did not quite feel they were of the same people, nor did they want to migrate to Ethiopia even after it should be freed from the Italians. Ethiopia for them was not the same as Zion for the Jews. The increase of Negro group identification that grows out of sympathy for the Ethiopians, the Indians, and the Indonesians arises from a belief that they are potential allies against the white world, and from a recognition that the Negro problem in America is a world-wide problem.

Negroes also have a feeling of kinship for certain groups within the United States. During the Reconstruction period, there was a beginning of labor solidarity with some of the lower-class Southerners (who thereupon became known as "scalawags" to most of the other whites), but this was clipped short by the Restoration and terror. The Socialists had a slight influence in reviving this feeling of workers' solidarity among Negroes during the period from 1919 to 1925; but, except for the formation of one all-Negro union (the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters) within the A.F. of L., the movement came to nothing because the white workers would not reciprocate Negro friendliness. The Communists tried it again after 1928, and the new pattern of industrial unionism beginning in 1933, which culminated in the C.I.O., sought to bring workers together regardless of color and without segregation. The C.I.O. had a considerable degree of success, and a significant proportion of Northern Negro

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 111, 112.



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industrial workers would now hold that their chief enemies are the capitalists and not all white men.

Negroes also evince a certain solidarity with Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Mexicans, and other "colored" minorities in this country, especially when they learn of discrimination against them. On the other hand, these people have not been friendly in return, and they are generally concentrated on the West Coast where there have been few Negroes until three or four years ago. Moreover, Negroes are to a considerable extent in competition with these other lower-class, discriminated-against groups. An interesting situation arose after World War II when Japanese Americans began to return to their West Coast homes, from which they had been evacuated during the war and which were now largely occupied by Negroes who had come West to take jobs in war industry. In the extreme housing shortage, it was feared there would be friction between the two groups. However, most Negroes recognized that the Japanese had been evacuated largely because of prejudice, and they therefore made every effort to seek other homes and restore those they were living in to their Japanese owners. Reports indicate that Negroes and Japanese are now living amicably side by side in West Coast cities.

The American minority group with which the Negroes have had the closest contact has been the Jews. Until two decades ago Negroes did not think of Jews as a minority group — anti-Semitism was slight in comparison with anti-Negro prejudice, and Jews were white and treated Negroes just as other white men did. This attitude persists today; a political advertisement in the *Los Angeles Tribune*, consisting primarily of a plea to Negroes to vote for a Negro candidate, indicates this general identification of Jews with the majority group. Its headline read: "Anglo-Saxon-Semitic Representation is Out."<sup>5</sup> Negroes have always been mildly anti-Semitic because it was part of Christian American cul-

<sup>5</sup> *Los Angeles Tribune*, January 24, 1948, p. 3.

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ture to be so. As anti-Semitism increased generally in America, it increased among Negroes. Further, there were special areas of friction with Jews<sup>6</sup> — a large proportion of the white merchants who solicited Negro trade and set up shop in Negro slums were Jews; many of the housewives who hired Negro servants in the Northern cities were Jews; and many of the property owners who were willing to sell or rent to Negroes were Jews.

Negro hatred for the merchants was based partly on the relatively high prices a small merchant — a large part of whose business is credit — must charge; partly on the inferior quality of the goods sold to a customer who demands "the cheapest"; and partly on the failure of the merchants — who often staffed their small stores with members of their families — to hire Negro clerks. Since the Jewish storekeepers were located in Negro areas, they were subjected to strong retaliation in the Northern cities, especially in the "don't buy where you can't work" campaigns and on the part of the nationalist racketeers who required storekeepers to pay for "protection."

Negro businessmen find anti-Semitism a major weapon in the struggle for customers. Sheppard's<sup>7</sup> study of Negro businessmen in Chicago reports that they formed an association which excluded white merchants and adopted such slogans as "Patronize Your Own" and "Sustain Negro Enterprise." The association's president, in an interview with Sheppard, justified an anti-Semitic policy with a rational selfishness:

This situation boils down to the law of nature known as the struggle of the survival of the fittest. And our slogans, our program, are a weapon in that struggle. . . . The Jews' weapons are reputation, business contacts, control of the best districts, and a good training in business. The Negro doesn't have those weapons

<sup>6</sup> A study of these special areas of friction in one city is that of E. P. Wolf, A. D. Loving, and D. C. Marsh, *Negro-Jewish Relationships* (Wayne University Studies in Inter-Group Conflicts in Detroit, No. 1. Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1944).

<sup>7</sup> Harold L. Sheppard, "The Negro Merchant: A Study of Negro Anti-Semitism," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIII (September 1947), 96-99.

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and if he's going to survive and get ahead, then he's got to insist that his people patronize his store, and not the Jew's. After all, the Jew can open up a store outside of the Black Belt, but can the Negro? <sup>8</sup>

The president of the St. Louis Business League, in a series of articles for the *St. Louis Argus*, was much more explicit about the conflict between Negro and Jewish businessmen in the competition for Negro customers. Especially in his article of October 24, 1947, does a source of real antagonism between the two groups become apparent:

A Negro can hardly rent a store for business in his own neighborhood because the Jew has thought ahead of him. When the Jew sees the drift of the Negro population he steps in and buys up the strategic corners and spots for the Jew. He rents to the wholesaler, to the retail sales outlet. He supplies every Jew store in the Negro belt as well as others from his wholesale houses. The Negro should be made conscious of the advantages of wholesale business and commercial property investments that we might protect the Negro businessman in competition, by ownership and more certainly assure opportunity for a Negro in business. We have got to develop the same tactics and techniques of the Jew if we ever hope to recover the business of communities. To run him out of our neighborhoods we have got to offer substantial competition to him. We as a people buy homes, the Jew will sell his home to buy a store. Believe it or not it is a fact. Business is the life of a Jew and we have to make our business the life-line of the Negro if we are to prosper as a people. We cannot live nor do business in his neighborhood. Why let him do it in ours. Negro economic improvement must become a movement and the movement must stand solidly for the race. We have to think black, act black and live black to develop opportunity through business for the Negro as a definite economy. . . .<sup>9</sup>

Negro nationalism, also, has always been associated with anti-Semitism, from the time that Garvey spoke of "Jewish

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>9</sup> Fred A. Jones, "Our Obligation and Responsibility to Buy Black," *St. Louis Argus*, October 24, 1947, p. 6.

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control" of the Negro's economic life to the time when the pro-Japanese Negro nationalists — Jordan, Hartrey, and Best — were in contact with the Christian Front.<sup>10</sup>

The friction with Jewish housewives, especially in New York City, became most significant during the depression when wages were low and there were always more Negro women willing to work than there were housewives willing to hire them. There developed in the Bronx what came to be known as "slave markets." Negro women would congregate on street corners and housewives would come out and hire them by the day. The fact that such nonregular work was especially hard, that the hiring process was humiliating, and that there was constant supervision on the part of the housewife because the maid was new and unknown to her — all these factors created intense hatred on the side of the maids which sometimes became transformed into anti-Semitism. A certain degree of antagonism between maid and housewife seems inevitable because of the nature of the job, and in Northern cities this provides a small but constant stimulus toward anti-Semitism.

Negroes have always had extreme difficulty in getting places to live in Northern cities. The problem is especially serious because of the constant stream of northward migration. The prejudice against renting or selling homes to them has not been quite so strong on the part of Jewish landlords, and for this reason Negroes frequently inhabit buildings owned by Jews. Rents are high because of the discrimination, and the Negroes who have recently come from the backward South have low standards of keeping up a house. Both these circumstances contribute to friction between landlord and tenant, which sometimes turns into anti-Negro prejudice and anti-Semitism. In other words, one cause of Negro anti-Semitism is the relatively lower anti-Negro prejudice among Jews. Jews are willing to exploit Negroes while the more prejudiced white non-Jews are not, because eco-

<sup>10</sup> Otley, *'New World A-Coming,'* pp. 122, 335-39.

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conomic exploitation involves economic service and social contact with Negroes. Negroes resent the exploitation and thus become anti-Semitic.

Negro writers have recognized the problem of friction between the two groups. Claude McKay, the Negro poet, held that "American Jewry is a very important part of the oppressing white majority. . . . more than any other whites, the Jewish group touched the vital life of the colored minority. . . . But this is a labor and social issue that should not involve anti-Semitism."<sup>11</sup> Chandler Owen, the newspaperman, summarizes an article on anti-Semitism among Negroes thus: "It would be a mistake to conclude that there is a Negro-Jewish problem in the nation. There is not. The Jews are simply the victims of an overdose of the anti-white psychology unfortunately gripping the large mass of Negroes."<sup>12</sup>

The National Urban League was sufficiently disturbed about anti-Semitism among Negroes to put out a leaflet addressed to Negro workers containing brief articles against anti-Semitism by three nationally known leaders — Lester B. Granger, A. Philip Randolph, and Willard S. Townsend. Making a powerful, rational appeal for alliance between Negroes and Jews, L. D. Reddick specifies the nature of anti-Semitism among Negroes:

. . . anti-Semitism among Negroes in the United States is, in large measure, urban, Northern and historically recent. There are no organized movements. Scurrilous sheets like *Dynamite*, which was published in Chicago years ago, and the completely misnamed *Negro Youth*, published in New York more recently, have been shortlived. Aside from a series of sensational articles by an unattached writer in *The Amsterdam News* last fall, the unfavorable comment in the Negro press has been sporadic.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Amsterdam Star-News* (1938), quoted in Ottley, 'New World A-Coming,' p. 132.

<sup>12</sup> Chandler Owen, "Negro Anti-Semitism: Cause and Cure," *National Jewish Monthly*, 57 (September 1942), 15.

<sup>13</sup> L. D. Reddick, "Anti-Semitism Among Negroes," *Negro Quarterly*, I (Summer 1942), 114.

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And Roi Ottley says:

Being of very recent vintage, anti-Semitism has hardly penetrated the surface of the Negro's thinking, and thus has little or no roots; though, as observed by Doctor L. D. Reddick, Negro curator of the Schomburg collection of Negro literature, "There is, to be sure, a small body of rhymes in the folklore which stems from the anti-Jewish elements in the Christian tradition." If these have been translated into active opinion, it certainly is not apparent in Negro life, he says. . . . The large mass of Negroes, it is well known, have long been wedded to American ideals and therefore are basically not anti-Jewish.<sup>14</sup>

Ottley points out, however, that while he found the Jewish organizations concerned about anti-Semitism among Negroes, they were doing nothing about anti-Negro prejudice among Jews.<sup>15</sup> This feeling of noncooperation has been expressed by other Negroes. For example, it was largely through Negro efforts that the FEPC was secured, yet Jews, as well as other minority groups, benefited from it. Late in 1942, when the life of the FEPC was threatened, the *Pittsburgh Courier* stated that "the Jews should fight with us if they hope to share the benefits of our fighting," and, on the same day, the *Amsterdam Star-News* was saying editorially that Negroes and Jews "could both well afford to rid themselves of adopted prejudices and band together on a common front."<sup>16</sup> On subsequent occasions Jewish leaders have stated that they were working hard to get an FEPC bill through Congress, but were not getting the active support of some Negro leaders.

Jealousy of the Jews has been a motive for anti-Semitism among Negroes, not only because of the much higher economic positions Jews have achieved, but also because of the attention that Jews have secured as a discriminated-against minority group. The following characterization has been giv-

<sup>14</sup> Ottley, *New World A-Coming*, pp. 128, 135-36.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-31.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 134.

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en, for example, of the anti-Semitism of the late Robert S. Abbott, founder of the *Chicago Defender*:

It was a terrible indignity to Abbott that "foreigners" received preferential treatment by the federal government over the "black citizenry born and reared here and which has served with unswerving devotion the cause of this nation." Abbott's tendency was to make a special problem of the Negro's subjugation to discrimination, and, almost without exception, he failed to point out the related problems of minority elements in the population which, if united, would have wielded far greater power. He occasionally ascribed the same stereotyped notions about the economic solidarity of Jews as the most rabidly anti-Semitic metropolitan dailies.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly Joseph D. Bibb, who is usually friendly toward Jews in his column in the *Courier*, is bitter about the relative attention given to the displaced person:

Sob writers are bemoaning the sad and tragic fate of the "Displaced Persons" of Europe. These unfortunate and wretched people are being tossed and buffeted from pillar to post. Most of them are ragged, dejected and hungry. Kind-hearted Americans are responding to appeals for food and sanctuary. But America itself seems unconcerned, untouched and unperturbed by the pathetic plight of hundreds of thousands of displaced and uprooted colored Americans. . . .

We well remember how the Italian, Polish and Irish immigrants looked when they were first concentrated at Ellis Island. . . .

But they were aided, guided and instructed by friends, agencies and public institutions. They soon became oriented and before long many had linked up with the fascist-minded folk of America. They, too, soon placed their heels upon the necks of the colored Americans.

Nothing, almost nothing, is being done to orient the displaced persons of color. Fellow-Americans and comrades in color have taken little notice of the appalling and astounding ignorance of the majority of these refugees.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Lochard, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>18</sup> "Displaced Persons," *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 23, 1947, p. 8.

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George S. Schuyler, who is perhaps the *Courier's* best-known columnist, is against letting displaced persons immigrate to the United States for fear they will displace Negroes from jobs. Schuyler's attitude has deeper roots than that, however, since he is also against the migration of Jews to Palestine, even though he is willing to take political lessons from the Zionist movement:

American Negroes might well consider what the Zionists have accomplished and try to do something of the same kind in the United States, but without the racial snobbery and imperialistic spirit the Zionists have displayed.

Of course, the Jews have no more claim on Palestine than the Alpha Kappa Alpha. Even the Holy Bible, the Jewish *Mein Kampf*, says that Abraham came out of Chaldea originally and not from what is now Palestine, and his offspring did not tarry long in the countries between before they went into Egypt where they remained for three centuries. [Followed by more ancient and medieval history, and pseudo-history of the Jews.]

Thus the Zionist gabble of "repatriating" these Jews to their "homeland" is just so much hogwash. . . .

Nevertheless the Zionists have "sold" the world on their "rights" in Palestine, as against those of tarbrushed (with Negro blood) Arab aborigines (whom they regard as inferiors), and have solidified their claim by pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into agricultural colonies, subsidized by Jews in all parts of the world, which is supposed to prove that Jews are more capable than Arabs. Incidentally, this "subsidy" results from wholesale, organized pressuring of poor Jews everywhere to contribute to the racket on pain of being regarded as disloyal.

Aframericans, avoiding some of the Zionist bad judgment, could organize scores of agricultural colonies here as the Zionists have done in Palestine, and thus spare hundreds of thousands of Negroes from the miasmatic rigors of the urban ghettos. While Aframericans have mastered the technique of survival much better than the Jews (who are supposed to be smarter), nevertheless they can learn much about hurdling obstacles from studying the progress of Zionism.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "Views and Reviews," *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 24, 1947, p. 7.



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Schuyler subsequently came out against a small trickle of Jews migrating to Surinam,<sup>20</sup> and, possibly to project a charge away from himself, accused the Jews of being like Hitler.<sup>21</sup> In another article against Zionism, he reveals a type of anti-Semitism that is seldom expressed in public in the United States:

[By migrating to Palestine, Jews] are merely seeking another Country from which they can proceed to rise to power again as a great political State. . . . Given control of this wealth [the natural resources of Palestine] and the ability to exploit it with hundreds of millions of dollars contributed by Jews in the United States and elsewhere, it is possible for the Jews to become one of the richest and most powerful groups in the world today. . . . By what means the majority of the members of the UN Assembly were induced to vote in favor of this iniquitous partition of Palestine I do not know. But I do know that it is not going to help the masses of Jews either in Palestine or elsewhere. Indeed, it may ultimately result in their decimation.<sup>22</sup>

It would appear that a leading Negro newspaper columnist is also given to making threats against Jews, although he claims simply to be an anti-Zionist.<sup>23</sup>

A study by Wedlock of the writings of Negro newspapermen on the subject of anti-Semitism in Hitler's Germany revealed another interesting basis of anti-Semitism among Negroes:

Despite the fact that the majority of Negro writers do denounce German anti-Semitism with varied degrees of intensity, a close perusal of the articles forces one to the belief that the writers, with a few outstanding exceptions, are either indifferent

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, January 24, 1948, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> "World Today," *ibid.*, June 5, 1948, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> "Views and Reviews," *ibid.*, December 27, 1947, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Schuyler's column in the *Pittsburgh Courier* for March 27, 1948, p. 7. Another columnist, J. A. Rogers, while also anti-Zionist and also critical of the behavior of some leading American Jews, has not been known to express Schuyler's type of extreme anti-Semitism. (See Rogers' column in the *Pittsburgh Courier* for December 20, 1947, and January 31, 1948.)

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to German anti-Semitism or view with evident pleasure the degradation of a minority group other than their own.<sup>24</sup>

Although some Negroes express envy, criticism, and hatred of Jews, such an attitude is by no means predominant in the Negro press. The leading Negro newspapers are very alert in finding out who are their friends and enemies among the whites, and since Jews undoubtedly do Negroes relatively more good than harm, the Negro press is correspondingly favorable. Marjorie McKenzie, another columnist for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, illustrates this alertness in a column devoted primarily to a plea in favor of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, a liberal organization. At the conference's annual dinner,

Negroes were on hand in disproportionate numbers to sponsor SCHW, but they did not contribute as liberally as last year. As a matter of rather obvious fact, they were out in their Easter finery to lend support and very little else. As the names were read out for each contribution, most of them sounded Jewish (if the frank bad taste and patent inaccuracy of such a comment can be forgiven for the making of this point). In broad terms, of course, the Jew in the United States has a great stake in Southern Conference objectives, but the direct emotional appeal which the organization has for Southerners and especially for Southern Negroes must be lacking to them. Two million of America's five million Jews live in New York City alone and otherwise live chiefly in Northern urban centers. Many of them had relatives and friends in Buchenwald, but most of us still have relatives and friends in Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, etc. We can plead, if we wish, that we have less money than our less-discriminated against Jewish brother. In this instance, however, which involves a particular cross-section of Washington life, the Negro members of the group, who are largely professional people, are as well off financially as its white members, who are intellec-

<sup>24</sup> Lunabelle Wedlock, *The Reactions of Negro Publications and Organizations to German Anti-Semitism* (Washington: Howard University, 1942), p. 83. Cited by Harold Orlansky, "A Note on Anti-Semitism Among Negroes," *Politics*, 2 (August 1945), 250-52.

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tuals, petty Government officials and others of middle-class status.<sup>25</sup>

Pro-Zionist editorials and columns appear fairly frequently in the Negro press.<sup>26</sup> When the Rosenwald Fund closed down in June 1948, most Negro newspapers carried laudatory editorials on the philanthropy of Julius Rosenwald and mentioned the fact that he was Jewish. Not only in the writings of the columnists, but also in the regular news articles we find appreciative recognition of the work done by Jews for Negroes. For example, under a headline which reads "Priest and Rabbi Urge Unbiased School Aid," we learn that Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, when he was president of the American Jewish Congress, testified before a Senate labor and public welfare subcommittee in favor of federal aid to education without distinction as to race or color.

Pointing out that the American Jewish Congress "has been vigilant and active in the struggle to achieve for all equality of educational opportunity," Dr. Wise said its "attack upon discrimination in education because of irrelevant considerations of race, religion, color, national origin and ancestry has been waged on many fronts."<sup>27</sup>

Another article presents a brief summary of an article on restrictive covenants by Charles Abrams in *Commentary*, a publication of the American Jewish Committee.<sup>28</sup>

In sum, the attitudes of Negroes toward Jews are complex. On the one hand, there is a tendency to identify Jews with all the other oppressing whites, yet also to adopt the general Gentile prejudice toward them. Upper-class Negroes tend to be jealous of Jews for getting so much sympathetic attention as a minority group, and to criticize Jews for not cooperating on general minority problems. In all classes these attitudes

<sup>25</sup> "Pursuit of Democracy," *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 19, 1947, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Two notable examples are the column of Joseph C. Carpenter in the *St. Louis American* of May 27, 1948, and the main editorial in the *Pittsburgh Courier* of March 13, 1948.

<sup>27</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 3, 1947, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, May 31, 1947, p. 3.

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are strongly colored by the constant special frictions that result from the widespread economic relations between the two groups. Negroes often feel that Jews, being a minority group also, ought not to contribute to the persecution of Negroes, but since they do, Negroes feel a special vindictiveness against them.<sup>29</sup>

On the other side of the ledger is the fairly widespread recognition on the part of Negroes that Jews are not quite as prejudiced against them as are other whites. When they think about it, which may not be often, they realize that even the special frictions are due to the fact that Jews are willing to trade with them, hire them, and rent to them — although there is the sarcastic afterthought that this is done for profit. Among upper-class Negroes there is also appreciation of the Jews' efforts on Negroes' behalf and of the common benefit derived from some of the activities of the Jewish defense organizations.

In addition to these direct attitudes toward Jews, Negroes also have more general attitudes that affect their relations with Jews. In the first place, they often compare their own position as a minority group with that of the Jews and end with a feeling of self-blame, which leads to a combination of admiration and jealousy of Jews. Secondly, the Negroes, like all other minority groups (though less than the Jews), do not want to saddle themselves with the problems of another minority group when they already have so many themselves. Coupled with this reluctance is a less rational desire to identify themselves with the majority group, not with another discriminated-against group. Orlansky has suggested that anti-Semitism gives Negroes one of their few opportunities for release from frustration.<sup>30</sup> They may even hope that the

<sup>29</sup> This point is well expressed by James Baldwin, "The Harlem Ghetto: Winter 1948," *Commentary*, 5 (February 1948), 165-70.

<sup>30</sup> Orlansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-52. This author makes the following interesting suggestion for reducing Negro anti-Semitism: "Only when propaganda is directed *against* accommodation and against the totality of our venomous culture can it hope to be effective, for then the Jew emerges as a

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stimulation of anti-Semitism will encourage the majority group to vent more of its antagonism on the other minority rather than on their own.<sup>31</sup> This, like some of the other anti-Jewish attitudes just reviewed, also contributes to group self-hatred among the Negroes. Clark suggests further that self-hatred, being in direct conflict with the need for self-respect, may be repressed and disguise itself in a feeling of justified anti-Semitism.<sup>32</sup>

On the whole, therefore, Negroes cannot be said to be very friendly to the Jewish group. Yet some of the public opinion polls show that they are less anti-Semitic than white Christians. There is some likelihood that Negroes and Jews will move toward closer collaboration in the future, for several reasons—they are the two largest minority groups in the United States, they frequently meet the same problems in the same places, both are developing powerful defense organizations, and both are casting around for allies. In so far as the group identification of both Jews and Negroes increases in the future—except to the extent that it is based on a narrow nationalism and a narrow race pride—both groups will be more willing to work together. The growth of group identification will make each group more concerned about making a more effective protest and stamping out prejudice and discrimination wherever it appears.

fellow-sufferer and ally in the battle against privilege, instead of a competitor for lackey status."

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth B. Clark, "Candor About Negro-Jewish Relations," *Commentary*, I (February 1946), 8-14.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

## **VI. THE FUTURE of *Group Identification and Its Effects on Intergroup Relations***

**W**E HAVE seen how, over a period of about forty years, Negro group identification has been built up until it is now a powerful force in Negro life in America. As Negroes become more educated, as they continue to migrate northward and westward, as their vote counts for more and more, as they secure better jobs, as they achieve more success in their protest, as color differences become less significant, as the courts decide more and more cases in accord with the intent of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, as the Negro newspapers reach more people more of the time — and if all these trends persist — Negro group identification will continue to grow. As we have seen, there are some major blocks to its growth which probably can never be overcome, but other obstacles are already crumbling.

We may ask what would happen to Negro group identification if the general position of Negroes in American life should be altered radically. If Negroes should be pushed back into slavery, which is unlikely, it is highly probable that they would form an effective underground movement and engage in extensive sabotage. Even if the terror were intensified only to the point that was prevalent during the two decades from 1890 to 1910, Negroes would turn into a truly revolutionary group, probably along Marxist lines. What binds them so close to American democracy now is the Constitution and other embodiments of the American Creed, and if these should disappear in a period of terror Negroes would no longer feel tied to the fascist form of gov-

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ernment that would then prevail in America. Of course, if the terror were as extreme as that against Jews in Germany, the Negroes' high visibility would allow them to be easily killed off and thus no underground movement could develop.

At the other extreme, we may imagine what would happen if all prejudice and discrimination were suddenly to disappear. Negroes would undoubtedly retain their group identification for a while, basing it on memories of former disabilities, on the few unique elements in their culture, and on their common appearance. But Negroes today are so much against separation, and so much for full equality and integration, that it is doubtful whether this group identification would last long. The contacts with the past that the Negro History movement is trying to develop are not deep enough or significant enough for Negro group identification to last any length of time if it were based on them alone. Identification with Africa is largely secondary among American Negroes — it is based on rejection by America, and if America should cease to reject, Negroes would generally cease to identify with Africa. The situation would become much like that in countries like Brazil today, where Negroes are mixed into several mobile classes rather than set in one fixed caste as in the United States. If there were no prejudice, intermarriage would take place slowly on the basis of individual choice and the Negro group itself would gradually disappear.

What is much more likely to happen, on the basis of present trends, is that discrimination will decrease slowly and prejudice even more slowly. In that case, as we have already indicated, the trend toward an increasing group identification would persist. Negroes would become welded into a much more group-conscious and effectively organized group. Although the discrimination which promotes the protest would decrease, the protest itself would increase as Negroes achieved a better position from which to protest. This might almost be said to be one of the unhappy laws of social rela-

### *Future of Group Identification*

tions—when a group that has been discriminated against increases its group identification and opposes the discrimination more effectively, and when the majority group then reduces its discriminations, the conflict between the two groups increases for a while rather than decreases. This seems to be the situation at the present time.

We have seen how the growth of group identification has increased the self-confidence of Negroes. It has made them less ashamed of being Negroes and prouder of the fact that they are the group more sinned against than sinning. It has also materially affected their relations with whites. In the first place, it has given them more ease and poise in their personal relationships. Partly because of increased education and the migration out of the South, but also because of heightened group morale, there is a much greater tendency for Negroes today to stand up straight when talking to a white man, look him in the eye, and speak clearly. The shifting, mumbling Negro with his eye on the ground is found now only in the more backward areas of the South.

Secondly, the growth of Negro group identification has aided the development of effective protest organizations. Highly educated and talented Negroes are now more willing to go in for race leadership. The masses are more willing to give their moral support to the activities of the organizations, and even on occasion to act in concert when the leadership asks them to do so. The organizations secure not only fairer applications of the law but also changes in the attitudes of whites. It has been largely through the efforts of the NAACP and the Interracial Commission that lynching has declined so remarkably in the South<sup>1</sup> and that 57 per cent of Southern whites are now in favor of federal intervention to stop lynching (in violation of the old Southern sentiment for states' rights).<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, Negroes as a group have learned to make their

<sup>1</sup> Myrdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 560–61.

<sup>2</sup> George Gallup, American Institute of Public Opinion Research, reported in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 2, 1947, p. 11.



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vote count. It has been estimated that about 1,861,000 Negroes voted in 1940,<sup>3</sup> and the number has gone up perhaps 25 or 50 per cent since the Supreme Court outlawed the white primary in 1944. If Negroes voted in the same proportion as do whites, and this is the case in the North,<sup>4</sup> there would be about five million Negro votes in the country. This is a significant bloc and must be taken into account by politicians. Negroes have learned to shift their vote from one party to another; they are just beginning to learn how to make white politicians realize, as they themselves now do, the significance of their vote.

Fourth, a large proportion of Negroes have become aware of events throughout the country and throughout the world which affect them. They are interested in everything that affects Negroes, and the Negro press both caters to and stimulates this interest. Their new awareness gives them a better perspective on how they should act in their own communities and how their strategy in the race conflict should be developed. Allied to this perspective is a fifth influence of the growing group identification—the fact that Negroes now protest nearly every significant instance of discrimination. They no longer “take it lying down,” but rather seek to make the offending whites as uncomfortable as possible.

In these and probably many other ways, the growing group morale and group identification among Negroes are having an influence on race relations in the United States. The “races” are essentially in conflict even though physical violence is relatively infrequent. The Negroes’ aim is full achievement of democracy and its concomitants—liberty, equality, and fraternity—or, in negative terms, the elimination of the terror and of discrimination and segregation. Not all white men are their enemies, but only those who would uphold violence, discrimination, and segregation against Negroes. One of the Negroes’ chief supports in this battle is a feeling of strength and pride in their group and its cause.

<sup>3</sup> Myrdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 497, 1329.

<sup>4</sup> See pages 119–20 of this book.

## **APPENDIX:** *Some Topics for Research on Negro Group Identification*

1. Which manifestations of protest promote high morale and which are simply frustrating and so make for low group morale? (E.g., cheating whites in petty ways vs. organization for protest.)
2. Which manifestations of group identification promote high morale but later hinder most effective use of resources? (E.g., avoidance of high technical education in favor of academic; strongly nationalist activities.)
3. What are the first effects on group identification of leaving a terror-ridden but simple existence (the rural South) and coming to a free but anomic city? The later effects?
4. What individual psychological motives are called into play by group pride?
5. When an individual Negro is converted to a predominantly white movement (Catholicism, Communism) which is making a bid for Negro membership by working against discrimination, what is the nature of the new attachment and how does Negro group identification affect it?
6. How does Negro group identification affect a situation in which Negroes and whites are working together (for a range of situations)?
7. What are the relative effects of a major setback to Negroes, or of a major gain for Negroes, on Negroes who have high group identification as compared to Negroes who have low group identification?
8. What is the effect on Negro group identification when individual Negroes are thoroughly accepted in white society (Communists, intellectuals, seamen, miners, artists, etc.)?
9. What is the interrelation between anomie and group identification? (That is, find some individuals who are anomic and

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see what effect it has on their group identification, and vice versa.)

10. What is the effect on group identification of economic success? (Compare professionals and businessmen.)
11. What is the "incidence" of group identification, by class, age, educational level, region, rural-urban residence?
12. What personality disturbances, if any, accompany group self-hatred?
13. What is the etiology of group self-hatred in the individual?
14. How do Negroes with high group identification act toward whites as compared to Negroes with group self-hatred?
15. What are the attitudes toward other minority groups of:  
(1) Negroes with high group identification based on concern with protest; (2) Negroes with high group identification based on nationalistic race pride; (3) Negroes with group self-hatred?
16. What are the motives for Negroes' voting, and voting for particular candidates?
17. What are Negroes' attitudes toward various race leaders?
18. What are the reasons for nonparticipation in protest organizations?
19. What is the factual knowledge of national and international politics on the part of Negroes with high and with low group identification?
20. To what extent is there cynicism, negativism, and "tiredness with protest" on the part of Negroes with high group identification? In general, what is the relation between an individual's group morale and his personal morale?

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